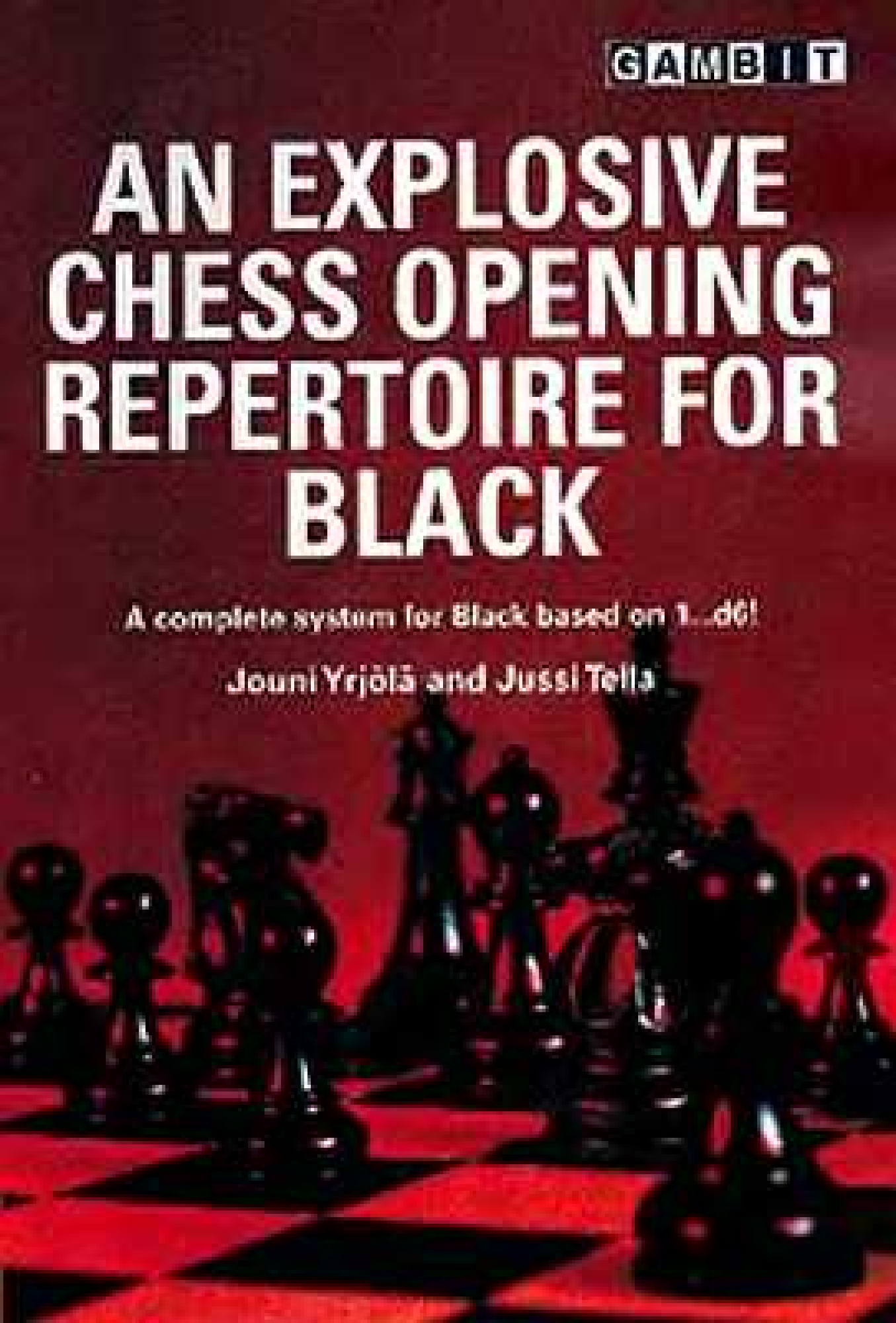
GAMBIT

AN EXPLOSIVE CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK

A complete system for Black based on 1...d6!

Jouni Yrjölä and Jussi Tella



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Jouni Yrjölä and Jussi Tella

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Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
+–	White is winning
±	White is much better
⩲	White is slightly better
=	equal position
∞	unclear position
⩱	Black is slightly better
∓	Black is much better
–+	Black is winning
Ch	championship
Cht	team championship
Wch	world championship
Ct	candidates event
IZ	interzonal event
Z	zonal event
Wcht	world team championship
Ech	European championship
Echt	European team championship
ECC	European Clubs Cup
OL	olympiad
jr	junior event
wom	women's event
mem	memorial event
rpd	rapidplay game
sim	game from simultaneous display
corr.	correspondence game
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
½-½	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(*n*)	*n*th match game
(D)	see next diagram

Introduction

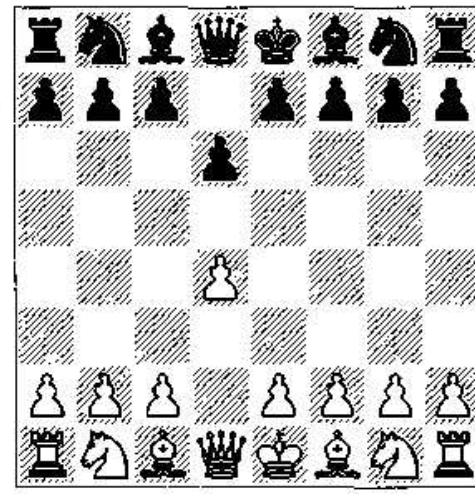
The Aim of this Book

Our main objective is to give Black a complete repertoire with the opening move 1...d6. The other aim is to provide a more detailed theoretical survey of the opening lines 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5, 1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 and all the other 2nd moves for White (except 2 e4). These lines have been generally neglected by the opening theory industry until now and the theory in *ECO* is not of the highest possible level, with some important lines missing entirely. We are therefore about to jump into rather unexplored territory. Our main objective (providing Black with a complete repertoire) demands that we also provide playable lines against the moves 1 e4 and 2 e4, and also against White's other first moves. This is why Chapters 20-29 are necessary but they are treated in a more selective manner than the earlier core parts of the book.

History

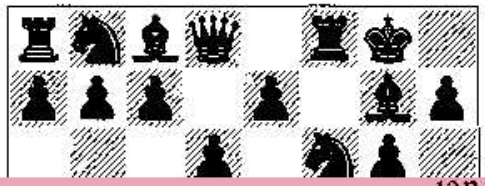
There doesn't seem to be much early history in the lines 1...d6 against 1 d4, as some of the main systems only started to appear in the period 1950-1970, and some have only acquired any real popularity in the last two decades. In *The Oxford Companion to Chess* the opening 1 d4 d6 *(D)* is attributed to Pillsbury for some reason but who really has heard of the Pillsbury Opening? Most players seem to think 1...d6 is not a specific opening at all but rather a move to transpose to some well-known openings such as the Pirc, Modern, King's Indian or Dutch, and over the years many players have used it for precisely this purpose.

W



The line 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 was popularized by Julian Hodgson during the 1980s (although, e.g., Miles used to play it earlier). This is why we call it the Hodgson line. The line 2 c4 e5 often leads to territory generally classified as part of the English Opening (*ECO* code A21). However, it has little in common with other English Opening lines. This line also became more

popular towards the end of the 1980s. In this case, there is no single player with whom we can closely identify this variation, but it is popular with



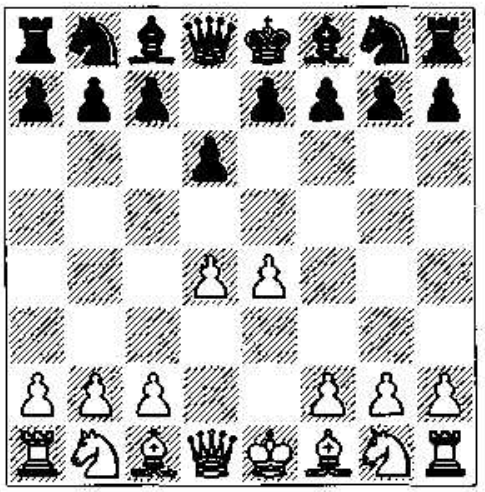
w

8 ♗g2

Ian-Minasian
, Protvino 1993.

Summary of Lines Available

Against 1 e4 and 1 d4 d6 2 e4



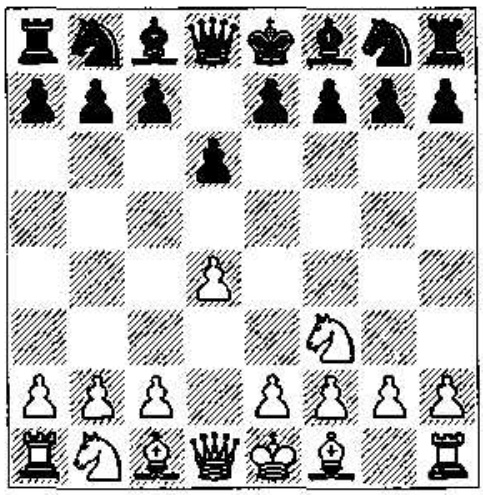
1) Our main recommendation is the Pirc Defence, meaning the well-known variations arising after the moves 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6. The Pirc is a completely valid opening, as proved by many games at grandmaster level – this is a major benefit, as you can be sure that your time spent learning it will not be wasted. For an amateur player wishing to learn and play the 1...d6 repertoire, the main problem with the Pirc is that it demands a significant amount of theoretical knowledge. We do not discuss the Modern move-order 2...g6 because we don't want to allow White to head for King's Indian-type positions with 3 c4.

2) There is also the Endgame System, where Black plays either 1 e4 d6 2 d4 e5 or 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 (or 3 f3) 3...e5. We must emphasize that to some players the quick liquidation to an endgame with a slightly weakened pawn-structure might seem a nightmare. However, if you want to have something against 1 e4 with a minimal need for learning theory, or if you want to test your opponent in a long endgame, then this may be a good choice. However, you have to be prepared to play the line of the Philidor Defence which arises after 4 ♘f3.

3) Also worth noting is the Czech Variation, which is characterized by the moves 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 c6. This system is much easier to learn, but Black has some theoretical problems at the moment in the sharpest lines. However, the chance of White having a detailed knowledge of the theory of this rare line is not very high, which might make it a worthy surprise weapon. However, we decided against providing detailed coverage of a line that we cannot really recommend.

With 1 d4 the choice of system is harder, as White controls the course of the game with his second move. But we have included a minor choice, anyway.

Against 1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3



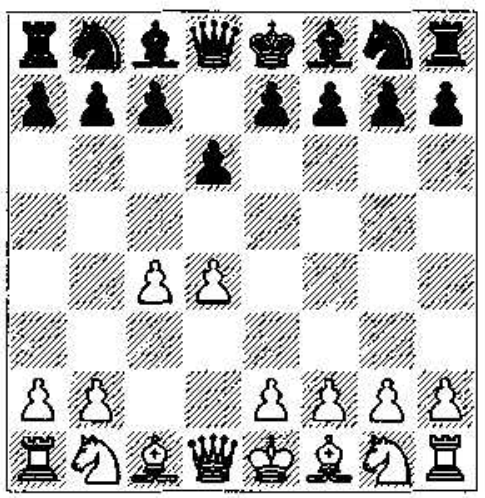
1) The main line with 2...♗g4 is reminiscent of some Old Indian or Modern lines if White plays 3 c4, though many independent position-types are available to both players, especially those where Black exchanges on f3, creating an unbalanced position. After 3 e4 we have a completely independent position, which is regarded as a peaceful one, though slightly passive for Black.

2) The line of the Old Indian which arises after 2...♘f6 3 c4 ♗f5 offers Black some active counterplay close to the ideas of the King's Indian in the main lines. However, there are many quite dangerous options for White, which Black should know, so if the reader wants to play this variation, then additional preparation is necessary.

3) The Portuguese Gambit 2...♗g4 3 c4 e5 is worth a closer look if Black is looking for a surprise weapon.

Against 1 d4 d6 2 c4

B



1) The main line with 2...e5 is a fully acceptable choice, with no theoretical problems. However, the amount of material is quite large there, so there is a clear need for preparations. Theoretically the most critical line is 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 f5.

2) The line of the Old Indian which runs 2...e5 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♗f5 is possible here. It has occasionally been chosen by strong players, but some problems have cropped up recently. However, the whole line is quite positional, offering good chances for active counterplay in the main lines.

3) The line of the Old Indian which runs 2...♘f6 3 ♘c3 (or 3 ♘f3) 3...♗f5 is also an option here.

4) The Portuguese Gambit, 2...e5 3 ♘f3 ♗g4, is another possibility at this point.

Practical Results

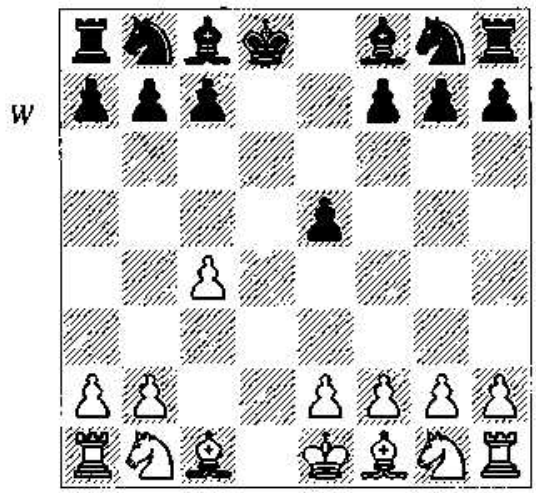
The line 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 has been a real gold-mine for Black. Especially the extremely bad statistics of the exchange of queens after 3 dxe5 is one of the most astonishing phenomena in chess. Perhaps this can be partly explained by the persistent delusion of many weaker players that it is a good idea to exchange the queens at the first opportunity when facing a higher-rated opponent. But even the other lines 3 ♘f3 and 3 ♘c3 are scoring relatively poorly for White. This is why most 1...d6 players are happy to see 2 c4 on the board and the need to use the trans-positional possibilities to other openings explained earlier is significantly smaller than after 2 ♘f3.

The Hodgson variation, 2 ♘f3 ♗g4, is scoring perfectly well for Black, whose practical results are no worse than with other second moves like 2...g6 or 2...♘f6. However, for a serious tournament player it is not a bad idea to use some of the transpositional possibilities every now and then because predictability is usually a weakness in chess.

White has gained the best practical results with 2 e4, and they are slightly above the average. This may be a psychological problem for some players. For players who like to play the Pirc, Modern or the endgame system regularly against 1 e4 this should not be a problem but the other players should consider whether the opponent feels comfortable in these openings. Many 1 d4 players don't.

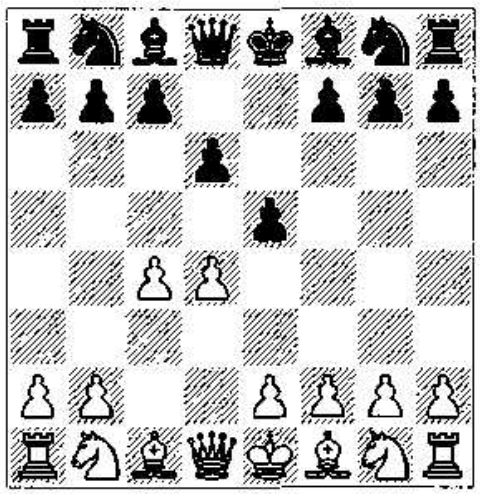
For Whom is this Repertoire?

These lines have always attracted original fighting players such as Hodgson, Miles, Speelman, Adams, Gulko, Hickl, Agrest, etc., and there is a lot of flexibility to transpose to different kinds of systems. Most of the lines are more positional than tactical in nature but they leave a lot of space for creativity and aggressive play by Black. Players who like sharp theoretical and concrete tactical battles where home preparation plays a key role should prefer systems like the Dragon, Najdorf or Grünfeld. For players who don't like endings, our repertoire is hardly optimal although the many endings discussed usually take rather a queenless middlegame nature. The only ending Black is obliged to accept in this repertoire arises after 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 dxe5 4 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 *(D)*.



This ending is very easy and systematic for Black and by no means a dead draw – indeed, Black can often create winning chances surprisingly quickly.

1 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5: Introduction



In this part of the book (Chapters 1-10) we study what to play as Black after 1 d4 d6 2 c4. Black's most direct approach is to play 2...e5 to attack the strong centre that White has formed in his first two moves. This direct plan is related to the endgame system 1 e4 d6 2 d4 e5, but there is one major distinction. Here the endgame after 3 dxe5 is not dangerous for Black, so White must seek other plans. These other plans, focusing on the battle for the centre, are 3 d5, closing the centre, and 3 e3 and 3 ♘f3 to support the centre, either with a pawn or with a knight. White's last main option, 3 ♘c3, gives Black the chance to open the centre, and White usually loses some time because he has to take back on d4 with his queen.

Specialists

There are some specialists who have played the variations presented in this part of the book very often. These specialists include the British grandmasters Jonathan Speelman, Michael Adams, Colin McNab and Julian Hodgson, together with other strong players such as Jörg Hickl, Zurab Azmaiparashvili, Evgeny Agrest and Viktor Komliakov. The most notable detail is that some of these players have scored really well with this opening, as a clear plus result as Black is always a good achievement. It seems that some of these players use 1...d6 in a flexible manner. Either they try to play for a win against weaker players, or they wish to transpose to some known openings, but without allowing some variations they want to avoid.

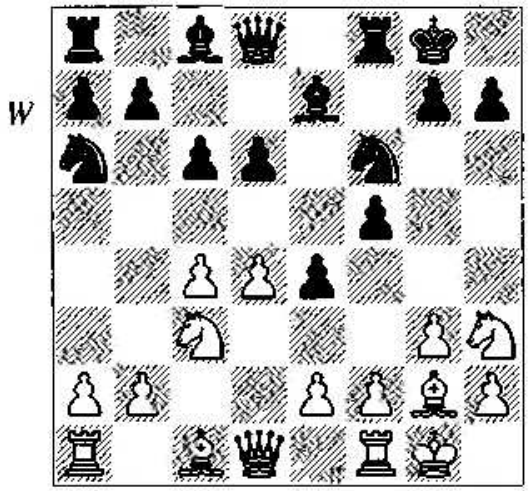
Statistics

The general trend is that Black scores very well: in my database Black has made an incredible 56% result after 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5. The table on the following page is how White has scored with his various possibilities on the third move. It shows the number of games together with White's percentage score, overall rating and performance.

Variation	Games	W's score	W's rating	W's Performance
3 ♘f3	1143	49%	2376	2399
3 dxe5	415	33%	2269	2234
3 ♘c3	315	49%	2368	2386
3 d5	170	39%	2287	2269
3 e3	87	29%	2275	2196

Introduction to 3 ♘f3

In Chapters 2-6 we study the positions after 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4, with Black continuing ...f5 to form a pawn-chain in the centre. In the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings* the main lines of this variation can be found under the code A21, since they can also be reached via the move-order 1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 d6 3 ♘f3 f5 4 d4 e4. The main feature of this variation is the rapid advance of Black's pawns in the centre, and the white counter-attack against them before Black gets a chance to support them too well.



Avshalumov – Dorfman
Cannes 1990

Plans for White

White has a few general positional plans to counter the black centre. He can try a pawn-break, either with the usual f3, or with the rare g4. He can try to get an outpost for his knight, either on the usual square f4, or on g5. Or he can try to stop Black's central expansion ...d5 by playing d5 himself. So, in the first place it is White who chooses the nature of the play.

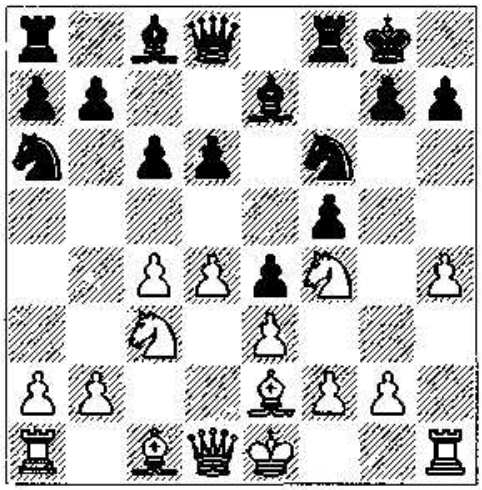
In the following diagram we see a basic position with White playing g3. White's main plans are 10 f3 to start the attack against Black's centre, or 10 d5 to restrict Black's pieces and stop Black supporting the centre with ...d5.

In the diagram on the following page, we see White adopting the plan of occupying central outposts with his knights. This is a basic position in the variation with e3 and ♗e2. The f4-knight controls the centre well, and Black has no plans to undermine the knight with a pawn.

Plans for Black

Black's set of tools contains plans to support the central e4-pawn, and plans

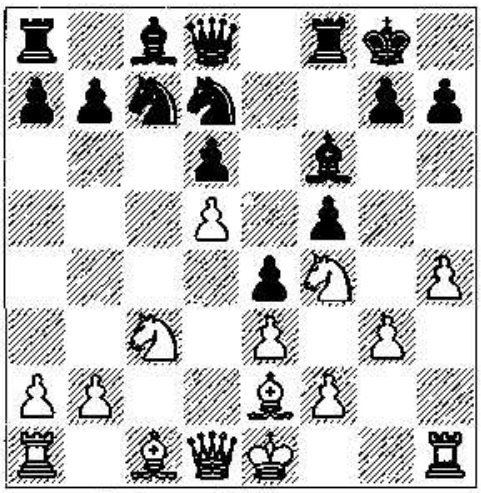
B



Salov – Romero
Madrid 1992

to improve the positions of his pieces. The most common development for the dark-square bishop is to place it on the long a1-h8 diagonal, and Black's queen's knight is usually developed via a6-c7 to support the centre and keep an eye on the vulnerable e6-square.

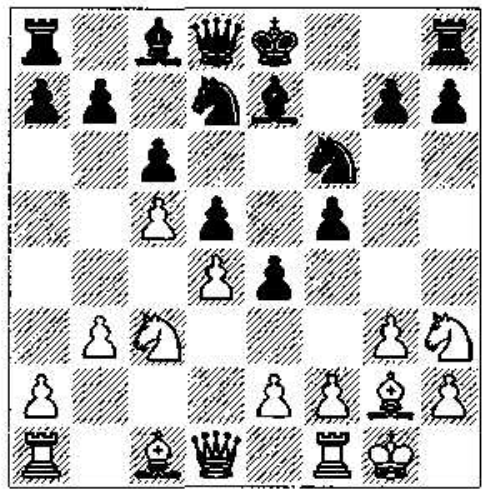
W



Salov – Romero
Madrid 1992

White has played d5, but Black's bishop is well positioned on the long diagonal, and Black's knights are ready to become active with usual plans such as ...♘e5 or ...♗e5 and ...♘f6. The d5-pawn can become a target, while White's bishops are ineffective for now.

W



Zakharevich – Komliakov
Moscow 1996

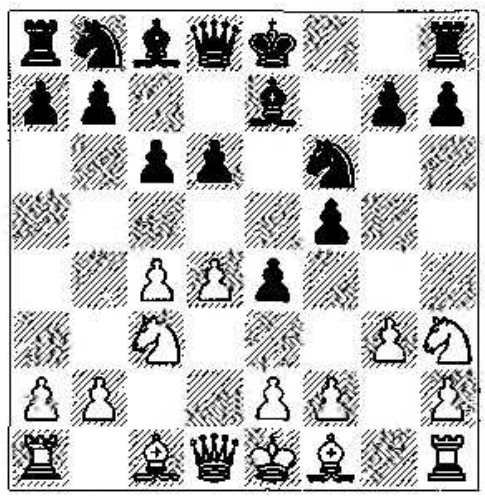
If Black has a chance to play ...d5 without the pawn becoming a target for immediate attack by White, it is generally useful for him to fix the centre. The pawns on d5 and e4 give Black space to manoeuvre his pieces, and White's pawn-breaks are not so effective any more. White should probably advance on the queenside and open lines there, but Black can expect good counterplay by an advance on the kingside.

2 3 ♘f3: Main Line with g3

In this chapter we study variations where White plays the logical g3, ♗g2 and 0-0 before starting any action in the centre. After these moves, White has two general plans: the central break (by playing f3) or the central build-up (with the d5 advance).

Black has various possible counters to these plans. In Line B1, we see the standard plan for Black, namely ...c6, ...♘a6-c7 and ...d5, with play usually gravitating to the queenside. The new plans with Komliakov's ...♘bd7 (Line A) and the flexible ...♔h8 (Line B2) are interesting although less-played options for Black.

1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 f5 5 ♘c3 ♗e7 6 ♘h3 c6 7 g3 ♘f6 *(D)*



8 ♗g2

Or:

a) The immediate 8 ♘f4 seems to be premature:

a1) The sharp 8...g5!? is possible; for example, 9 ♘g2 h6 10 h4 ♖g8 11 ♗d2 ♕b6 12 e3 ♗e6 13 b4 ♘bd7 14 a4 ♕d8 15 a5 ♔f8 16 ♗e2 ♔g7 17 ♕a4 a6 18 ♖b1 ♘f8 19 ♕a1 d5 20 c5 ♗f7 21 ♔d1 ♘e6 22 ♔c2 and the position is unclear, Delemarre-Christiansen, Antwerp 1995.

a2) Black can continue normally with 8...0-0 9 h4 ♘a6 10 e3 ♘c7 11 ♗d2 ♔h8 (11...♘e6!? looks good) 12 ♕c2 ♗d7 13 b4 d5 14 c5 b5 15 cxb6 axb6 16 ♖b1 ♘e6 17 ♘ce2 ♘xf4 18 ♘xf4 b5 = Pachman-Matanović, Portorož IZ 1958.

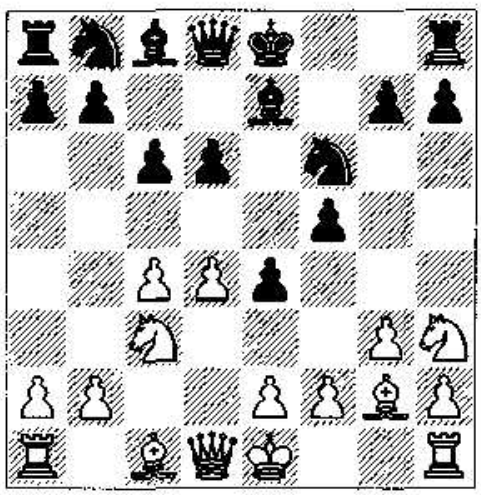
b) 8 ♗g5 is a rare way to develop the dark-squared bishop, but it is possible:

b1) 8...♘a6 9 e3 0-0 10 ♘f4 ♘c7 11 h4 ♘e6 12 ♗e2 ♘xf4 13 ♗xf4 ♗e6 14 ♔f1 h6 15 h5 ♗f7 16 b4 ♕d7 17 ♔g2 ± Schlosser-Heinatz, Dresden 1995, though Black's position is quite solid.

b2) 8...♘g4!? 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 e3 g5 (10...0-0!? is possible) 11 ♕d2 ♘a6 12 0-0-0 ♗d7 (12...h6!? seems to be a useful move) 13 c5 dxc5 14 ♗xa6 bxa6 15 ♘a4 ♗e6 16 ♘xc5 ♗d5 17 ♔b1 ♖b8 18 ♖c1 0-0 19 ♘g1 ± Lputian-Minasian, Protvino 1993.

We now return to 8 ♗g2 *(D)*:

B



Now:

A: 8...♘bd7!? 15

B: 8...0-0 17

Placing the bishop differently with 8...♗e6!? is perhaps playable; for example, 9 d5 ♗f7 10 0-0 ♘bd7, and now:

a) 11 f3 exf3 12 exf3 ♘e5 13 f4 ♘xc4 14 dxc6 ♕b6+ 15 ♔h1 bxc6 16 b3 ♘a5 17 ♖e1 ♖d8 18 ♗a3 ♕c7 19 ♕e2 is equal, Haba-Votava, Czech Cht 1997/8.

b) 11 ♘g5 ♗g8 12 f3 h6 13 ♘e6 ♗xe6 14 dxe6 ♘c5 15 fxe4 fxe4 16 ♗h3 ♕b6 17 ♔g2 ♕b4 ∓ Czerwonski-Mikhaletz, Swidnica 1999.

c) 11 b3 ♘g4 12 ♕d2 0-0 13 f3 exf3 14 exf3 ♘ge5 15 ♗b2 c5 16 ♖ael ♗f6 17 ♘f4 ± Fuhrmann-U.Helbig, Bundesliga 1997/8.

A)

8...♘bd7!?

This move is the latest idea invented by one of the specialists of this variation, Komliakov. Black's knight goes either to e6 (via f8) or to b6.

9 0-0

Or:

a) 9 ♘f4 is not good, as Black can start advancing on the kingside with 9...♘f8 10 d5 g5 11 ♘h3 h6 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 f3 d5 14 ♗e3 ♘e6 15 cxd5 cxd5 ∓ Lomineishvili-Komliakov, Moscow 1997.

b) 9 f3, aiming to play in the centre, is not especially dangerous; for example, 9...♘b6!? (9...exf3 10 exf3 0-0 is also a thematic position: 11 ♘f4 ♖e8 12 0-0 ♘f8 13 ♖e1 ♘g6 14 ♘e6 ♗xe6 15 ♖xe6 ♕d7 16 d5 ♗d8! = Sorin-Slipak, Salta Clarin 1995) 10 b3 d5 11 c5 ♘bd7 12 b4 ♘f8 13 0-0 h6 (13...♘e6!? leads to equality) 14 ♘f2 ♘e6 with a basic position-type with a closed centre, in which both sides have their trumps. However, White tried an interesting idea to sharpen the game on the kingside in Delemarre-Bologan, Wijk aan Zee 1996: 15 g4!? exf3 16 exf3 0-0 with a chaotic pawn-formation.

c) 9 d5 and now:

c1) 9...♘e5 (the basic central plan is possible here) 10 b3 0-0 11 0-0 ♗d7 12 ♗b2 ♘fg4 13 ♕d2 a5 14 ♔h1 a4 15 f3 ♘f6 16 ♖ab1 axb3 ½-½ Cafferty-McNab, British League (4NCL) 1999/00.

c2) 9...♘b6! and then:

c21) After 10 b3? cxd5 11 cxd5 ♘bxd5 12 ♘xd5 ♕a5+ 13 ♗d2 ♕xd5 Black wins a pawn, for which White doesn't get enough compensation: 14 ♘f4 ♕f7 15 ♗c3 ♗d7 16 ♖c1 ♖c8 17 ♗d4 (Lazarev-Gofshtein, Oberwart

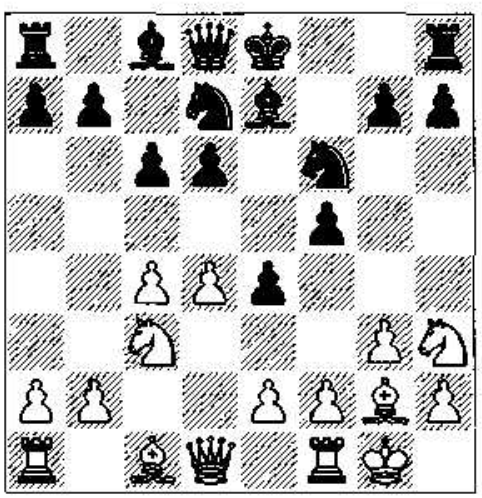
1993) 17...a6!? 18 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 19 ♘d5 ♕e5 ∓.

c22) 10 dxc6 bxc6 11 b3 d5 = Gofshtein.

c23) 10 ♕b3 ♘fd7! (10...a5 11 ♗e3 c5 12 ♕c2 a4 13 ♘b1 ♘bd7 14 ♘a3 ♘e5 15 f3 ♗d7 16 ♖d1 0-0 17 0-0 ♕e8 is OK for Black, Mastrovasilis-Salmensuu, Rimavska Sobota 1996; 10...cxd5 11 cxd5 0-0 12 0-0 ♕c7 13 ♖d1 ♕c4 14 ♗e3 ♗d7 = Dao-Anka, Budapest 1994) 11 0-0 ♘e5 (11...c5!?) 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 c5 dxc5 14 ♗f4 (14 ♖d1!? might be the most critical try for counterplay) 14...c4 15 ♕c2 ♗f6 16 ♖ad1 ♕e7 17 f3 exf3 18 exf3 ♘d3 ∓ Michaelsen-Agrest, Fürth 1999.

We now return to 9 0-0 *(D)*:

B



9...♘b6

After 9...0-0!? 10 f3 ♘b6 11 b3 d5 12 c5 ♘bd7 13 ♘f4, which seems to be a playable alternative, there has been a game with a curious knight manoeuvre: 13...♘b8 14 h4 ♘a6 15 b4 (15 ♖b1!?) 15...♘xb4 16 ♕b3 ♘a6 17 fxe4 fxe4 18 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♗xe4 ♗f6 20 ♗b2 ♘xc5 21 dxc5 ♗xb2 22 ♕xb2 dxe4 ∓ Gloria-Komliakov, Manila OL 1992.

10 b3 d5

10...0-0 11 d5 ± and 10...♗e6 11 d5 cxd5 12 ♘f4 ± allow White to fix the centre to his advantage.

11 c5

Or:

a) The tactical idea 11 a4 doesn't work because of 11...dxc4 12 a5 ♘bd5 13 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 14 a6 0-0 15 ♘f4 ♕f7 16 bxc4 ♕xc4 17 ♖a4 ♕f7 18 axb7 ♗xb7 19 ♖a5 ♘d5 ∓ Arsović-Simić, Belgrade 1994.

b) 11 cxd5 ♘fxd5 (11...♘bxd5 12 ♘a4?! 0-0 13 ♗b2 h6 14 ♕c1 g5 15 f3 e3 16 ♘c5 f4 ∓ D'Israel-Oratovsky, Netanya 1993) 12 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 and now:

b1) 13 a4?! g5! (13...♘c3!?) 14 f3 e3 15 ♕d3 f4 16 ♕e4 0-0 ∓ Permiakov-Komliakov, Kemerovo 1995.

b2) 13 ♘f4 and here:

b21) 13...g5!? 14 ♘xd5 cxd5 15 f3 0-0 16 fxe4 fxe4 17 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 18 ♗e3 ♗e6 19 ♖c1 ♖c8 20 ♕d2 ♖xc1+ 21 ♕xc1 ♕d8 = Radovici-Komliakov, Romania 1993.

b22) 13...♗f6!? 14 ♘h5 0-0 15 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 16 e3 ♗e6 is also possible, Grechikhin-Komliakov, Cherepovets 1997.

b23) 13...0-0 seems pretty safe for Black: 14 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 15 ♗f4 ♗f6 16 e3 g5 17 ♗c7 ♗e6 with a slight advantage for Black, Raeber-Oratovsky, Switzerland 1994.

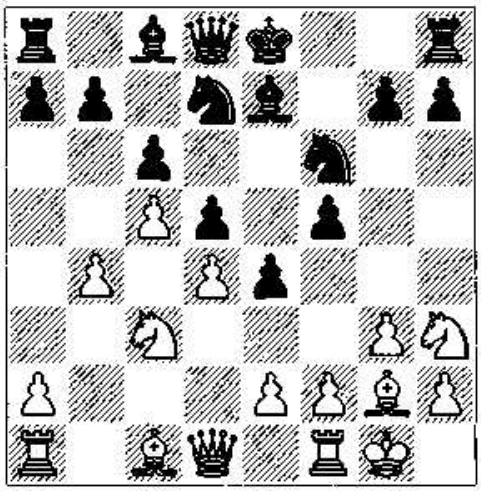
11...♘bd7

Now the knight has the strong post e6 available.

12 b4 *(D)*

12 ♗g5 leaves the dark squares too weak: 12...♘f8 13 f4 ♘e6 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 e3 ♘xc5 ∓ 16 ♕c2 ♘e6 0-1 Riedener-Klauser, Berne 1997.

B



12...♘f8

This position is quite easy for Black to play: ...♘f8-e6 improves the knight's position, and White's advance on the queenside is easy to counter.

a) 12...h6?! 13 f3 g5 results in a slightly more complicated version of the same position-type: 14 fxe4 fxe4 15 ♕b3 ♘f8 16 b5 ♘e6 17 e3 h5 18 ♘f2 h4 19 bxc6 bxc6 20 ♘fxe4 with enough compensation since the black king is still in the centre, Volke-Greenfeld, Munich 1992.

b) 12...a6?! 13 ♘f4 ♘f8 14 ♘a4 ± and White can use the thematic weak point on b6.

13 b5 ♘e6

13...h6?! is a risky attempt to complicate: 14 bxc6 bxc6 15 ♕a4 ♕d7 16 ♖b1 g5 17 f3 ♘g6 (17...exf3 18 exf3 ♘g6 19 f4 g4 20 ♘f2 0-0 21 ♘d3 ±) 18 fxe4 fxe4 19 ♘d1 0-0 20 ♘e3 ♘e8 21 ♘f2 ♕c7 (Savchenko-Komliakov, Russian Army Ch 1995) 22 ♘xe4! ♖xf1+ 23 ♔xf1 ±.

14 bxc6 bxc6 15 ♕a4 ♕d7 16 ♘f4 0-0

16...♘c7 17 f3 g5 18 ♘h3 h6 19 ♘f2 0-0 ½-½ Roobol-Hartoch, Dutch Cht 1995.

17 ♖b1 ♘c7!

The final opening plan: Black aims to finish his development with ...♗a6 and ...♖b8, at the same time keeping an eye on White's queenside activity.

18 h4 ♗a6 19 ♗h3 g6 20 ♗e3 ♖fb8 21 ♖xb8+ ♖xb8 22 ♖b1 ♖xb1+ 23 ♘xb1 ♕c8 24 ♕b4

½-½ Zakharevich-Komliakov, Moscow 1996.

Conclusion: The Komliakov plan appears to be completely sound for Black.

B)

8...0-0 9 0-0

Now:

B1: 9...♘a6 17
B2: 9...♔h8!? 20

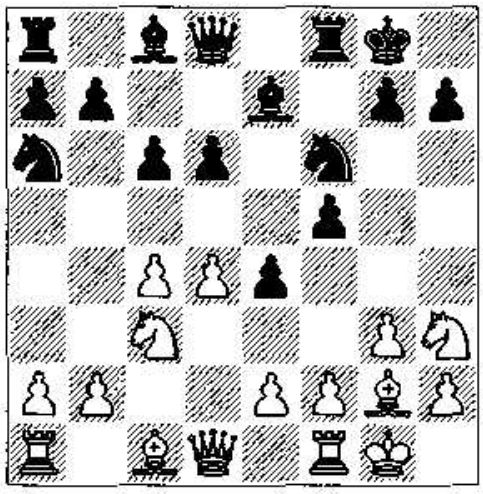
B1)

9...♘a6 *(D)*

This is the older starting position of the g3 variation. Black's easiest development is ...0-0 together with ...♘a6, aiming to support the centre through ...♘c7. White's sharpest try is probably to play f3 at once, as the older main line seems to pose no difficulties for Black.

10 d5

After 10 f3!? Black must make a major decision:



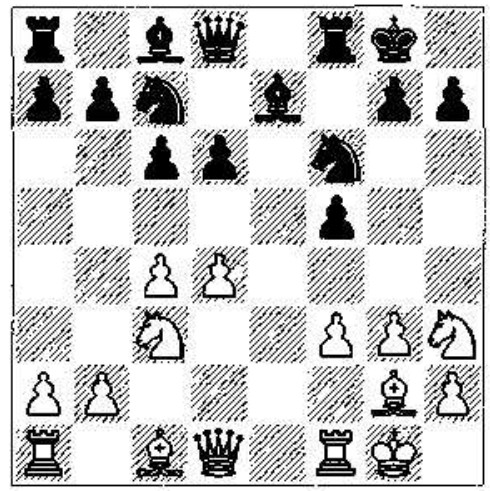
a) 10...d5!? (this move is rare but playable) 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 ♕b3 ♔h8 (12...♕b6 13 ♕xb6 axb6 14 ♗g5 ♗e6 15 ♘f4 ♗f7 16 a3 ± Illescas-Lautier, Linares 1994) 13 ♗f4 (13 ♗g5!?) 13...♘b4 14 ♗e5 ♘c6 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 e3 g5 17 f4 (17 fxe4!?) 17...g4 18 ♘f2 ♘e7 ∓ Vigus-Summerscale, London 1999. Black has maintained d5 by tactical means, and now he has a clear space advantage.

b) 10...♘c7!? (Black uses the hanging white knight on h3 to centralize his knight before starting any action in the centre) 11 fxe4 (11 ♕b3 exf3 12 exf3 ♖b8 13 a4 ♔h8 14 d5 cxd5 15 cxd5 b5 16 axb5 ♘xb5 17 ♘f4 ♘e8 18 ♘ce2 a6 19 ♕d3 ♘ec7 = Franić-Biti, Zagreb 1999) 11...fxe4 (11...♘xe4 12 ♘xe4 fxe4 13 ♖xf8+ ±) 12 d5 b5! (this sharp move is Black's main idea; 12...cxd5 13 cxd5 ±) 13 dxc6 (13 cxb5 ♘cxd5!? becomes quite messy) 13...bxc4 and now:

b1) 14 ♗g5!? ♗xh3 (14...d5 is not so good in view of 15 ♘f4) 15 ♗xh3 d5 16 e3 ♕d6 17 ♕a4 ♕c5 18 ♗f4 ♗d6 19 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 20 ♗d7 ♕c5 21 ♖ae1 ♖ab8 and Black has counterplay, Danner-Humer, Austria 1995.

b2) 14 b3 ♕e8 15 ♘f2 ♕xc6 16 ♘cxe4 (16 ♘fxe4!?) 16...d5 17 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 18 ♗a3 ♖d8 19 ♖c1 ♕a6 20 ♗b4 (Portisch-Gulko, Biel IZ 1993) and now Black should have no problems after 20....♗e6! =.

c) 10...exf3 11 exf3 ♘c7 *(D)* and now:



c1) 12 ♘f4 is best met by the flexible 12...♖e8 13 ♖e1 ♗f8 14 ♗e3 g6 15 ♕d2 ♗g7 16 ♖ac1 ♗d7 17 b4 and now 17...a5 18 b5 cxb5 19 cxb5 ♘xb5 20 ♘xb5 ♗xb5 21 d5 ♗d7 22 ♗d4 ♖c8 23 ♘e6 ♖xc1 24 ♕xc1 ♕e7 was fairly unclear in Fuhrmann-Van der Wiel, Bundesliga 1997/8, although the game ended in a draw.

c2) After 12 ♖e1 the only thing that has been tried is 12...d5 13 c5 b5 14 ♘f4. Then:

c21) 14...b4? 15 ♘a4 ♘b5 16 ♘d3 a5 17 ♘b6 ♖b8 18 ♘e5 ♗b7 19 ♗f4 ± is definitely not to Black's liking, Hoang Thanh Trang-Werner, Budapest 1993.

c22) 14...♖e8!?, with the point 15 ♘d3 ♘e6, looks pretty good.

c3) 12 d5. White is going to fix the centre and exploit his space advantage, so Black must react quickly:

c31) 12...b5!? 13 dxc6 bxc4 14 ♗e3 d5 15 ♕a4 ♔h8 16 ♖ad1 ♗e6 17 ♔h1 ♕b8 18 ♗f4 ♗g8 19 ♖fe1 ♗c5 20 ♗e5 ♕b6 leads to sharp play, but Black seems to be fine, Matamoros-Perez, Cienfuegos 1996.

c32) 12...cxd5 13 cxd5 (13 ♘xd5 ♘fxd5 14 cxd5 ♗f6 15 ♕b3 ♖e8 16 ♗d2 ♘a6 17 ♖ae1 ♘c5 18 ♖xe8+ ♕xe8 19 ♕c2 ♕a4 = Urban-Chekhov, Lubniewice 1995) 13...b5! and now Black's activity on the queenside gives him good chances:

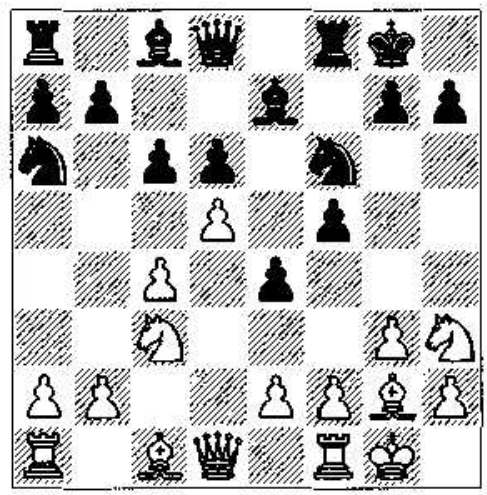
c321) 14 b4?! ♘d7 (14...a5 15 ♖b1 axb4 16 ♖xb4 ♗d7 is good for Black, Gulko-Short, Burgas 1995) 15 ♗e3 ♗f6 16 ♗d4 ♖e8 17 f4 a5 18 ♖b1 axb4 19 ♖xb4 ♖a3 ∓ Rogozenko-Hickl, Bundesliga 1996/7.

c322) 14 a3 a5 15 ♘f4 ♗b7 16 ♘e6 (16 ♖e1 ♖e8 17 ♕b3 b4 18 ♘a4 g5 19 ♘h3 ♗xd5 20 ♕d3 ∓ Wiedenkeller-Mokry, Hilversum 1993; 16 ♕b3 b4 17 axb4 axb4 18 ♖xa8 ♕xa8 19 ♕xb4 ♘fxd5 20 ♕b3 ♔h8 21 ♘fxd5 ♘xd5 22 f4 ♘b4 ∓ Lomineishvili-Kuporosov, Smolensk 1997) 16...♘xe6 17 dxe6 ♕b6+ 18 ♔h1 b4 and now the position is unclear according to Short, but Black seems to be doing fine in view of his activity. Generally this position is quite dynamic, and Black's active position gives him good prospects.

We now return to 10 d5 *(D)*:

10...♘c7

B



Or:

a) 10...c5 takes the dynamism out of the position by closing the centre, but White has a good target on e4 which he can exploit by 11 f3! exf3 12 exf3 ♘c7:

a1) 13 a4 ♘d7 14 ♗e3 ♘e5 15 b3 ♗f6 16 ♕d2 ♖b8 17 ♔h1 a6 18 a5 b5 19 axb6 ♖xb6 20 ♖a3 ♗d7 21 ♘f2 ♖e8 22 f4 ♘f7 23 ♘cd1 g6 24 ♘d3 ♕b8 with counterplay, Golod-Jonker, Dieren 1997.

a2) 13 ♕c2 ♘h5 14 f4 h6 15 ♗d2 a6 16 ♘a4 ♘e8 17 b4 cxb4 18 ♗xb4 b5 19 ♘b2 ♘hf6 20 c5 dxc5 21 ♗xc5 ♗xc5+ 22 ♕xc5 ♘d6 ∓ Kahlert-Czerwonski, Germany 1997/8.

a3) 13 ♘f4 ♖e8 14 b3 ♗f8 15 ♗b2 g6 16 ♕d2 ♗h6 17 ♖fe1 ♗d7 18 a4 ♘h5 19 ♘ce2 ♕e7 20 ♕c2 ♘xf4 21 ♘xf4 ♕f7 22 ♘d3 ♗g7 23 ♔f2 ♗xb2 24 ♕xb2 ♕g7 25 ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 with equality, Czerwonski-Høiberg, Århus 1998.

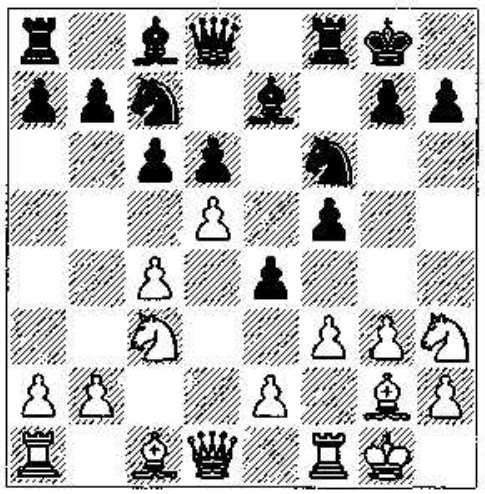
a4) 13 ♖e1 ♖e8 (13...♘d7 14 a3 ± Lautier) 14 ♕c2 ♗d7 15 a4 ♘h5 16 ♗e3 ♗f6 17 ♔h1 g6 18 f4 ± Lautier-Magem, Pamplona 1992/3.

b) The flexible 10...♔h8 is possible, but White gets some pressure after 11 ♔h1 (11 f3 cxd5 12 cxd5 ♕b6+ 13 ♔h1 ♗d7 14 ♘f4 exf3 15 exf3 ♖ae8 16 ♖e1 ♗d8 17 ♘e6 ♗xe6 18 dxe6 ♘c7 19 ♗f4 ♖xe6 20 ♖xe6 ♘xe6 21 ♗xd6 ♖e8 22 ♘a4 ♕f2 ∓ Overeem-Piket, Antwerp 1996) 11...♗d7 12 f3 cxd5 13 cxd5 ♕b6 14 ♘f4 ♖ae8 15 b3 ♗d8 16 ♗b2 ♘c5 17 ♖b1 ± Pinter-Speelman, Debrecen Echt 1992.

11 f3 *(D)*

11 ♘f4 is not played much at the moment, even though *ECO* gives it as ±; e.g., 11...g5?! 12 ♘h3 h6 13 f3 exf3 14 exf3 cxd5 15 cxd5 b5 16 a3 ♗b7 17 f4 g4 18 ♘f2 a5 19 ♕b3 ± Razuvaev-Gorbatov, Moscow 1991. Maybe one of the following logical alternatives on his 11th move is the reason for the lack of popularity: 11...♘g4!?, 11...♘d7!? and 11...cxd5!? (with the point 12 cxd5 b5).

B



11...exf3

Or:

a) 11...cxd5!? 12 cxd5 b5 is similar to note 'c32' to White's 10th move.

b) 11...b5!? is a sharper option for Black, when the activity on the queenside seems to give him good chances:

b1) 12 dxc6 bxc4 13 fxe4 ♘xe4 (13...fxe4 transposes to note 'b' to White's 10th move) 14 ♘f4 is messy.

b2) 12 cxb5 ♘xb5 (12...♘cxd5?! 13 ♘xd5 cxd5 14 ♗e3 ♗e6 15 ♕d2 ♕d7 16 a4 ♖fc8 17 ♗d4 ♗d8 18 ♖fc1 ♖c4 19 e3 ± Van Doeland-Riemens, Dutch Cht 1994) 13 ♘xb5 (13 dxc6 ♕b6+ 14 ♔h1 ♘xc3 15 bxc3 ♕xc6 is OK for Black) 13...cxb5 14 ♗e3 ♕a5 (14...♗b7 15 ♘f4! ±) 15 ♘f4 ♗d8! = Cu.Hansen-Vaganian, Ter Apel 1993.

12 ♗xf3

12 exf3 transposes to note 'c3' to White's 10th move.

12...cxd5 13 cxd5 ♘g4

13...♘d7!? 14 ♗e3 ♘e5 15 ♗d4 ♗f6 16 ♘f4 ♕e8 17 ♖c1 g5 18 ♘e6 ♘xf3+ 19 exf3 ♘xe6 20 dxe6 ♗xe6 ½-½ Neurohr-Lau, Bundesliga 1989/90.

Black has many good squares available for his minor pieces, and the slightly weakened white pawn-structure gives him good targets.

14 ♘f4 ♘e5 15 ♗g2 ♗d7 16 a4 ♗f6

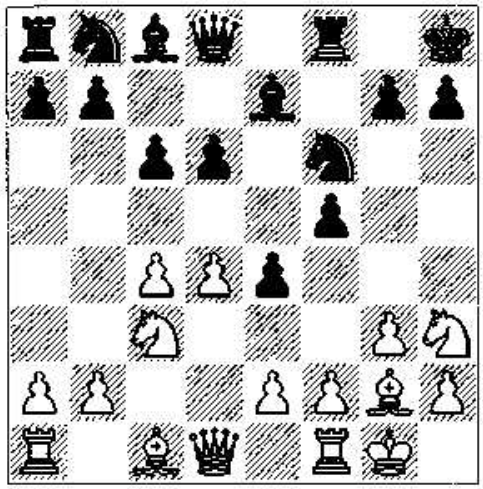
Black has equalized, Avshalumov-Dorfman, Cannes 1990.

Conclusion: Theoretically, there seem to be no special problems for Black in the main line with ...♘a6. However, some players might not like the sharp positions arising in the lines where Black plays the active ...b5.

B2)

9...♔h8!? *(D)*

W



This flexible move, played mostly by IM Georg Seul, is an interesting idea. It has also been tested by Vladimir Kramnik. Black invests time to move his king to a safer square, which allows him a wide choice of ways to start countering White's plans.

10 d5

The thematic central break has also been played here: 10 f3 d5 (10...♘a6!? 11 ♗g5 ♗e6 12 fxe4 ♘xe4 13 ♘xe4 fxe4 14 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 15 ♕d2 ♗xg5 16 ♘xg5 ♗xc4 17 ♘xe4 ♕e7 18 ♘c3 ♘c7 19 e4 ♖f8 20 ♖e1 h6 21 d5 ♕e5 22 dxc6 bxc6 with an equal position, Nenashev-Seul, Agios Nikolaos 1995) 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 ♗g5 ♘c6 13 ♘f4 ♘g8 14 ♗xe7 ♘cxe7 15 ♕b3 ♘f6 16 fxe4 fxe4 is equal, as 17 ♖ac1 g5 18 ♘fxd5 ♗e6 19 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 20 ♗xe4 ♖c8 21 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 22 ♔xf1 ♖xc3 23 bxc3 ♗xd5 24 ♕c2 ♕f8+ 25 ♔g1 ♕f7 was good for Black in S.Ivanov-Agrest, Leningrad 1990.

10...♘bd7

10...♘a6!? is another option, which transposes to note 'b' to Black's 10th move in Line B1.

11 b3

As Black has many good alternatives in the main line, White should maybe try some of the less-played options either here or on the next move.

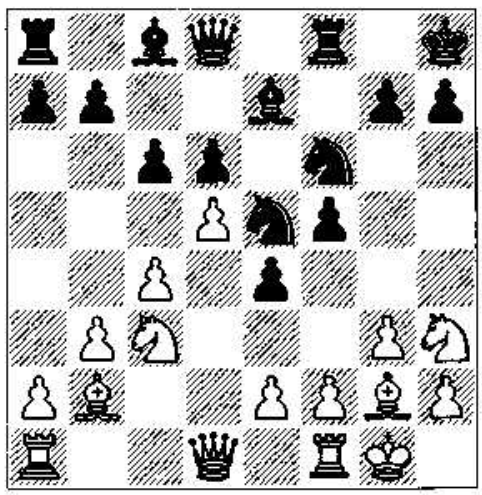
a) 11 ♗f4!? cxd5 (11...♘e5!? looks pretty normal) 12 cxd5 ♘e5 13 ♕b3 ♕b6 14 ♗e3 ♕a5 15 ♗d4 ♗d7 16 ♘g5 h6 17 ♘e6 ♗xe6 18 dxe6 ♖ab8 19 ♖fd1 ± Kveinys-Seul, Bonn 1995.

b) 11 f3!? ♘e5 12 ♕b3 ♘fd7 (12...exf3!? is a safe option) 13 fxe4 ♘c5 14 ♕c2 ♕b6 15 ♔h1 ♘xe4 16 ♘xe4 fxe4 17 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 18 ♗f4 cxd5 19 cxd5 ♗f5 20 ♗xe5 dxe5 21 ♖f1 g6 22 ♘g5 ± Gonzalez Garcia-Seul, Budapest 1995.

11...♘e5 12 ♗b2 *(D)*

12 ♔h1!? ♗d7 13 ♘f4 (13 ♗b2 ♘g6! 14 ♕d2 cxd5 15 cxd5 ♕b6 is equal, Gretarsson-Zaichik, Moscow OL 1994) 13...g5 14 ♘h3 h6 15 f3 exf3 16 exf3 ♘g6 and Black's position seems fine, though White got a small advantage after 17 dxc6 bxc6 18 ♗b2 ♔h7 19 ♕d2 ♕c7 20 ♖ad1 ♖ad8 21 ♖fe1 ♗c8 22 f4 g4 23 ♘f2 ± in Lazarev-Seul, Biel 1997.

B



12...♕e8!?

Or:

a) 12...♗d7 is a sensible developing move, though White may get some advantage with 13 ♕d2 cxd5 14 ♘xd5 (14 cxd5 b5 with activity) 14...♘xd5 15 ♕xd5 ♗c6 16 ♕d2 ♘g6! (16...♕e8 17 ♘f4 ±) 17 ♖ad1 ♕e8 18 f3 exf3 19 ♗xf3 ♖d8 20 ♗d5 ± Nikolić-Cu.Hansen, Wijk aan Zee 1994.

b) 12...♖b8 is regarded as a totally sound alternative. Black threatens to start counterplay on the queenside, and when White opens the centre, Black is well prepared for that: 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 c5 ♘eg4 15 cxd6 ♗xd6 16 ♕c2 ♕e7 17 ♖ad1 ♗a6 18 ♗c1 ♖bc8 19 ♖fe1 ♗e5 20 ♘a4 ♘d5 21 ♗g5 ♗f6 22 ♗xf6 ♘gxf6 has been evaluated as unclear, Schwartzman-Agrest, Malmö 1993. Generally Black seems to be OK.

13 ♕d2

13 ♘f4 ♘h5! is unclear, but 13 f3!? (with the point 13...♕h5 14 ♕d2) gives White a slight advantage according to Kramnik, but this has never been tested. However, Black seems to be ready for White's actions in the centre.

13...♗d7

This move is viable, but there are two interesting alternatives:

a) Aiming some extra force towards White's king with 13...♕h5 14 f3 cxd5 15 cxd5 exf3 16 exf3 ♗d7 17 ♘f4 ♕h6 18 ♖ad1 ♗d8! seems to be playable, based on 19 ♘ce2 ♗b5 20 ♖fe1 ♖e8 21 ♘d4 ♗b6 22 a4 ♗d7 23 a5 ♗c5 24 ♔h1 ♘h5 25 ♘xh5 ♕xh5 26 b4 ♘c4 27 ♕c3 ♗xd4 28 ♕xd4 ♘xb2 29 ♕xb2 f4 ∓ Bixquert Jimenez-Diaz Benitez, 1992.

b) 13...b5 (playing sharply on the queenside and trying to gain some space there) 14 cxb5 cxb5 15 ♘f4 ♖b8 might be Black's best, with the basic idea ...♗d8-b6.

14 f3

The positional 14 ♖ad1 is a sensible move. 14...a5 and now:

a) 15 f3 ♗d8 gives Black dark-square counterplay.

b) 15 dxc6!? bxc6 16 c5 d5 17 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 (17...cxd5!?) 18 ♗xe5 ♗xc5 19 ♕b2 ♕f7 20 ♘f4 ±.

c) 15 ♘f4 ♘g6 16 f3 ♘xf4 17 ♕xf4 was played in Lautier-Kramnik, Khalkidhiki 1992. Now 17...♕h5 leaves the fight for the centre totally unclear.

14...♗d8!

This standard bishop manoeuvre to the excellent a7-g1 diagonal works especially well here.

15 dxc6 ♗xc6 16 ♘f4 ♗b6+ 17 ♔h1 ♘h5

Black has counterplay, A.Meyer-Seul, 2nd Bundesliga 1997/8.

Conclusion: The flexible ...♔h8 gives Black good chances to use various thematic plans depending on White's actions. The play can become quite sharp, so Black also has good chances to play for a win.

3 3 ♘f3: Main Line with e3

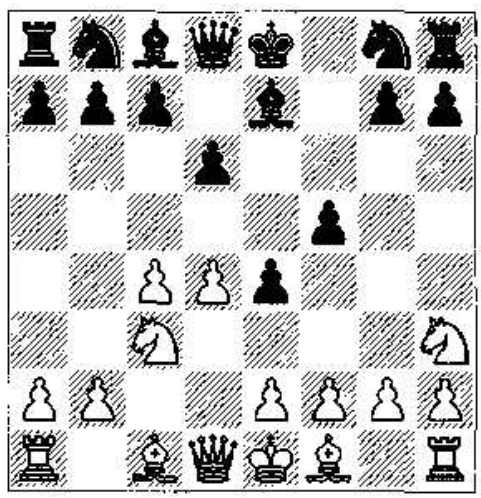
In this chapter we study positions in which White develops with e3 and ♗e2; usually this is connected with the knight manoeuvre ♘h3-f4. White tries either to break up Black's centre with f3, or to develop more calmly with d5.

Black has usually continued with the general plan ...c6, ...♘a6-c7 and ...d5 which seems to work well against all of White's various set-ups.

In the main line with e3 there have not been so many new games, so the critical positions have not changed for about ten years.

1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 f5 5 ♘c3 ♗e7 6 ♘h3 *(D)*

B



6...c6

6...♘f6 7 ♘f4 c6 8 h4 0-0 9 e3 ♘a6 transposes to Line A, and there are many other move-orders which arrive at the same position.

7 e3

Or:

a) 7 f3 ♘f6 transposes to the note to Black's 7th move in Line B of Chapter 4.

b) 7 ♗f4 is provocative:

b1) 7...♘f6 8 e3 0-0 9 ♗e2 h6 10 ♕b3 (Christiansen-Smejkal, Novi Sad OL 1990) 10...♕b6 11 ♕c2 (11 ♕a3!?) 11...g5 12 ♗g3 is unclear.

b2) 7...g5 8 ♗d2 h6 9 e3 ♘f6 and Black's activity should give him good chances: 10 f3 exf3 (10...a6 11 fxe4 fxe4 12 ♘f2 d5 13 ♕b3 b5 14 cxd5 cxd5 15 ♖c1 ♗b7 16 ♗e2 ♘c6 17 ♘cxe4! dxe4 18 ♘xe4, Gulko-Rivas, Dos Hermanas 1994, 18...♘xe4! 19 ♗h5+ ♔d7 20 ♕d5+ ♘d6 21 ♗g4+ ♔e8 22 ♕e6 ♕c7 23 d5 ♔d8 24 dxc6 ♗c8 25 ♕e5 is unclear) 11 gxf3 d5 12 ♕b3 ♕b6 is unclear according to Gulko.

7...♘f6

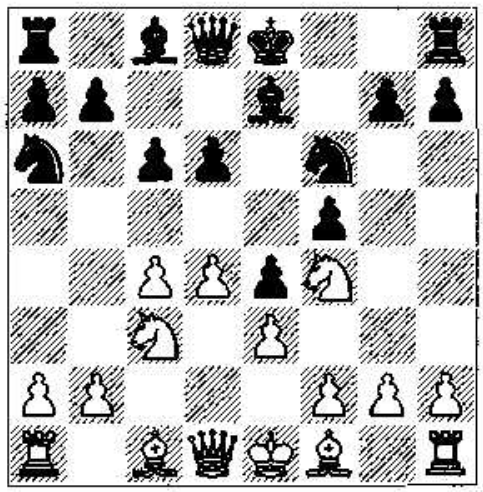
Now:

A:	**8 ♘f4**	24
B:	**8 ♗e2**	25

White can fix the centre immediately, but Black is OK: 8 f3 0-0 9 fxe4 fxe4 10 ♘f4 ♘a6 11 ♗e2 ♘c7 12 d5 g5 13 ♘h5 ♗f5 14 0-0 ♗g6, Ree-Quinteros, Amsterdam 1977.

A)

8 ♘f4 ♘a6 *(D)*



9 h4

9 ♖b1 is a logical alternative, although Black can just develop normally: 9...0-0 10 h4 ♘c7 11 d5 ♘g4 12 g3 ♗f6 (12...c5 13 ♗e2 ♘e5 14 ♗d2 ± Nikolaev-Samarin, Moscow 1992) 13 ♗d2 ♗e5 14 ♕b3 ♘f6 15 ♗e2 ♕e7 with equality, Janjgava-Oratovsky, Jurmala 1983.

9...0-0

9...♘c7 10 d5 ♘g4 is premature because of 11 ♗e2 (11 g3 ♗f6 12 ♗d2 0-0 13 ♗e2 ♕e8 14 ♖b1 ♘e5 15 b4 b5! allows Black too much activity, Schwartzman-Rotshtein, Cannes 1992) 11...♘e5 12 g3 ±.

10 d5!?

Playing this thematic move at such an early point leads to quite peaceful positions, where both players start manoeuvring their pieces towards the most active squares in the centre. Alternatives:

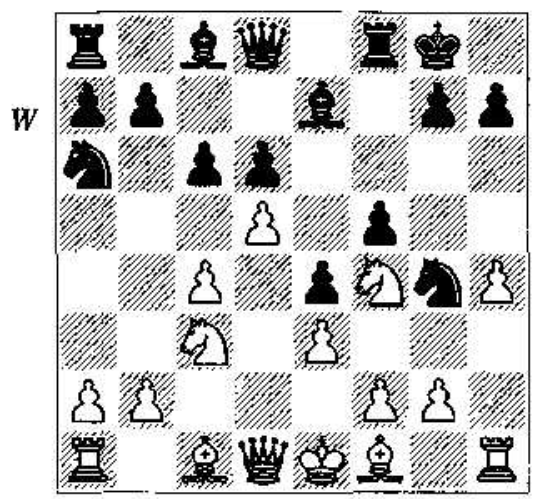
a) 10 ♗d2 ♘c7 11 ♕b3 (11 d5 ♘g4 12 g3 ♘e5 13 ♗e2 c5 14 a3 a5 15 ♖b1 ♗d7 16 ♔f1 g6 ½-½ Babula-Jansa, Czech Ch 1994) 11...♖b8 12 d5 (12 ♗e2 ♘e6 13 ♘h3 d5 14 0-0-0 b5 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 a3 b4 17 axb4 ♗xb4 ∓ De Kok-Wockenfuss, Amsterdam 1985) 12...c5 13 ♗e2 a6 14 a4 b6 15 ♕a3 ♘d7 16 h5 ± Sideif-Zade – Lukin, Pavlodar 1987. However, Black's position is quite dynamic, and as White's king doesn't find a safe square too easily Black has counterplay.

b) 10 b3 ♘c7 11 ♗b2 (11 d5 c5 12 ♗b2 ♘g4 13 g3 a6 14 ♗e2 ♘e5 15 ♔f1 is unclear) 11...♘e6 12 ♘ce2 ♘g4 13 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 14 g3 ♗f7 15 ♕d2 d5 16 ♘f4 ♕d7 17 ♗e2 ♘f6 18 ♖c1 ½-½ Fischdick-Polihroniade, Thessaloniki wom OL 1984.

c) 10 a3 ♘c7 11 b4 gives Black a chance to follow the normal central plans with 11...♘e6 12 ♘h3 d5 13 g3 h6 14 ♕b3 g5 15 hxg5 hxg5 16 ♗d2 ♔g7 17 cxd5 cxd5 18 0-0-0 ♖h8 19 ♗e2 ♕d6 20 ♔b2 ♗d7 ∓ Povah-Summerscale, British League (4NCL) 1996/7.

d) 10 ♗e2 transposes to Line B2.

10...♘g4 *(D)*



11 g3

11 h5 ♗g5! ∓.

11...♘e5!?

The other main move is 11...♗f6, when White enjoys a small plus after 12 ♗d2 (12 ♗e2?! ♗xc3+ 13 bxc3 ♘e5 ∓) 12...g6 (12...♖b8!?) 13 ♗e2 ♘e5 14 a3 ♘c7:

a) 15 ♕b3!? c5 16 ♕c2 ♗d7 17 ♖b1 (17 b4 cxb4 18 axb4 b5!? gives Black counterplay) 17...♕e7 (Terrie-Yudasin, Worchester 1990) 18 ♔f1 ±.

b) 15 ♕c2!? has also been proposed.

c) 15 b4 c5 16 ♖b1 b6 17 ♔f1 ± Polugaevsky-Lukin, USSR 1974.

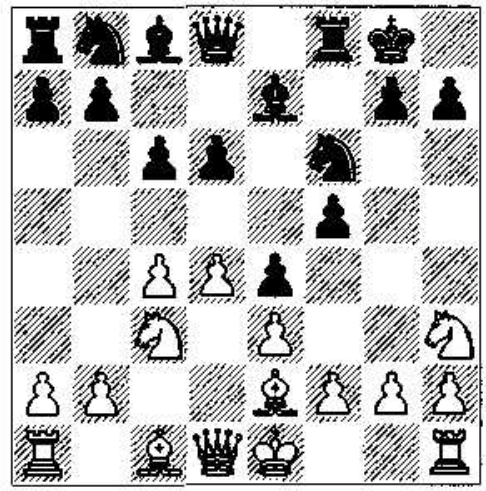
12 ♗e2 g6 13 ♔f1 ♗f6 14 ♔g2 c5 15 ♖b1 ♘c7 16 ♗d2 b6 17 a3 ♕e7 18 b4 ♗a6 19 b5 ♗c8 20 a4 a5 21 ♕c2 ♗d7 22 ♖bg1 ♘e8

½-½ Lindenmaier-Espig, German Ch (Bremen) 1998.

Conclusion: This type of closed position leads to manoeuvring and is not especially dangerous for Black, though there are not many chances of active play for him either.

B)

8 ♗e2 0-0 *(D)*


W

Now:

B1: 9 0-0 26
B2: 9 ♘f4 27

9 ♗d2 is an independent try, seeking queenside play. 9...♘a6 and then:

a) 10 ♖c1 ♘c7 11 ♕b3 ♔h8 12 0-0 ♖b8 13 f3 exf3 14 ♗xf3 ♗e6 15 d5 ♗f7 16 ♕a4 cxd5 ½-½ Kaufman-Benjamin, Parsippany 2000.

b) After 10 0-0 ♔h8 it is probably best for White to return to the central strategy by 11 f3, when 11...♘c7 transposes to the note to White's 10th move in Line B1, while 11...d5 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♕b3 ♘c7 allows White the instructive additional plan 14 ♗e1 ♗d6 15 ♗h4! ± Farago-Hawelko, Warsaw Z 1987.

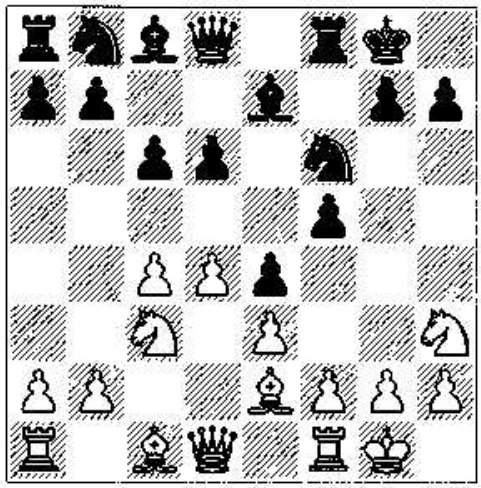
c) 10 ♕c2 ♔h8 11 a3 d5 12 c5 ♘c7 13 b4 leads to the closed position-type, and Black gets counterplay with 13...♗d7 14 a4 ♕e8 15 g3 f4! 16 ♘xf4 g5 17 ♘g2 ♗h3 18 ♖g1 (18 0-0 ♗xg2 19 ♔xg2 g4 20 ♖h1 ♘e6 21 h3 ♕g6 gives Black an attack) 18...♘g4 19 0-0-0 (19 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 20 h4 ♕h5 21 hxg5 ♕h2 22 ♘e2 ♘e6 with an attack for Black) 19...♖xf2 ∓ Röber-Hennings, Binz 1995.

d) 10 ♖b1 ♘c7 11 b4 d5 12 0-0 and again Black can choose the open position-type with a lot of dynamic play: 12...dxc4!? 13 ♗xc4+ ♔h8 (13...♗e6!?) 14 b5 ♗d6 15 bxc6 bxc6 16 ♕a4 ♗d7 17 ♕a5 ♘g4 18 g3 ♖f6 19 ♘g5 ♘xh2 20 ♔xh2 ♖h6+ 21 ♔g2 ♕xg5 22 ♘xe4 ♕g4 23 ♘xd6 ♕h3+ 24 ♔f3 ♕g4+

½-½ Wang Yaoyao-Tong Yuanming, Beijing 1996.

B1)

9 0-0 *(D)*



9...♘a6

9...♔h8!? is worth a closer look, with a flexible choice of plan according to White's actions: 10 f3 (10 d5 ♘bd7 11 b3 ♘e5 12 ♗b2 c5 13 a3 ♕e8 14 ♘b5 ♕d7 15 b4 a6 16 ♘c3 ♕c7 17 ♕b3 ♗d7 and Black is fine, Braun-Agrest, Passau 1994) 10...d5 11 ♕b3 ♘a6 (11...♕d6 12 ♗d2 dxc4 13 ♗xc4 b5 14 ♗e2 ♗e6 15 ♕c2 exf3 16 ♗xf3 ♘a6 17 ♗e1 ♘b4 18 ♕d2 ♖ad8 19 ♗g3 ♕d7 20 ♖fd1 ♘bd5 21 ♘f4 ♘xf4 22 ♗xf4 ♘d5 23 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 24 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 = Uhlmann-Lein, Bad Liebenzell 1996) 12 ♗d2 ♘c7 13 cxd5 (13 fxe4 fxe4 14 ♘f4 dxc4 15 ♗xc4 ♗d6 16 ♗e2 ♕e8 17 ♕d1 ♗f5 18 ♔h1 ♖d8 19 ♕e1 g5 20 ♘h3 ♕g6 ∓ Petursson-Hawelko, Dubai OL 1986) 13...cxd5 and then:

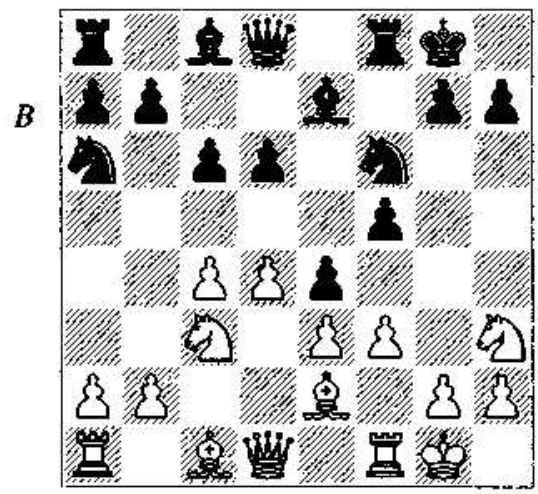
a) 14 f4 h6 15 ♖ac1 ♖g8 (15...b6!?) 16 ♖c2 g5 17 g3 ♘ce8 18 ♖fc1 g4 19 ♘f2 h5 20 ♘b5 ♗d7 21 ♗b4 ± Herraiz-Garza Marco, Torrevieja 1997.

b) 14 ♖ac1 ♗d6 15 a4 (15 f4 h6 16 ♘a4 b6 17 ♗b4 ♗a6 18 ♗xd6 ½-½ Uhlmann-Watson, Bundesliga 1997/8) 15...♕e7 (Pinter-Mokry, Dubai OL 1986) 16 fxe4 fxe4 17 ♘f4 ♗e6 with an unclear position, in which Black seems to have everything well under control.

10 f3 *(D)*

White follows a central strategy, hoping that the e4-pawn will be weak if Black allows the exchange, or that if Black exchanges on f3, then White will have chances to build a strong centre by playing e4 himself.

10 ♗d2 ♔h8 11 f3 ♘c7 12 fxe4 fxe4 13 ♘f4 d5 14 ♗e1 (14 cxd5!?) 14...dxc4! (an instructive case where Black gets a good position by relieving the central tension) 15 ♗xc4 b5 16 ♗e2 b4 17 ♘a4 ♘fd5 18 ♘xd5 ♖xf1+ 19 ♗xf1 ♘xd5 20 ♗f2 ♗g5 ∓ Zaichik-Mokry, Moscow OL 1994. Black's outpost on d5 is very useful.



10...♘c7

10...d5!? is a very logical move that covers the centre, and brings Black close to equality: 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 fxe4 fxe4 13 ♘f4 ♘c7 14 ♗d2 ♗d7 (14...♘e6!? is a possible improvement), and now:

a) 15 ♗e1 ♗c6 16 ♗g3 ♕d7 17 ♕b3 ♗d6 (17...♔h8 18 a4 a6 19 a5 ♘e6 = Uhlmann-Tseshkovsky, Leipzig 1975) 18 ♘h5 ♘xh5 19 ♗xh5 ♗xg3 20 hxg3 ♕e7 with a slight advantage for Black, Polgar-Hort, Biel 1987.

b) 15 b4 ♗e8 16 ♕b3 ♗f7 17 b5 ♘ce8 (17...b6!?) 18 b6!? a6 19 ♘a4 ♘d6 20 ♖ac1 ± Uhlmann-Knoll, Linz 1997.

11 ♕b3

11 d5 cxd5 12 cxd5 exf3 13 ♗xf3 leaves the white pawn-formation destroyed: 13...♘g4 14 ♗d2 (14 ♘f4 ♗g5 15 ♗xg4 fxg4 16 e4 b6 17 ♗e3 ♗a6 18 ♖f2 ♕d7 is level, Ivanov-Zaichik, Leningrad 1989) 14...♗f6 15 ♕b3 ♘a6 16 ♘f4 ♘c5 17 ♕c2 ♕e7 18 ♖ae1 a5 = San Segundo-Popchev, Mondariz 1994.

11...♔h8 12 ♗d2 ♘e6 13 fxe4 ♘xe4 14 ♘xe4 fxe4 15 ♖xf8+ ♘xf8

White has not found a way to keep attacking e4, and Black equalizes.

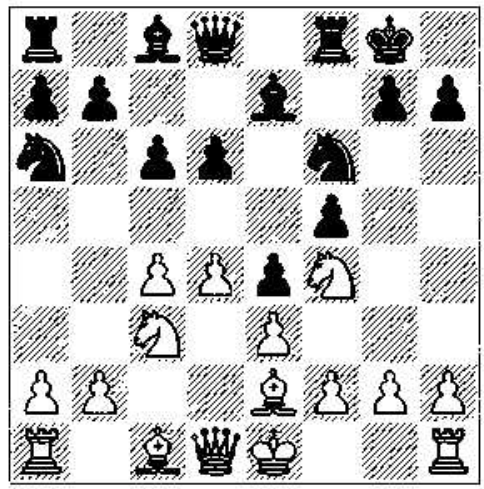
16 ♘f4 ♗g5 17 ♖f1 ♕e7

The game is equal, Portisch-Torre, Manila IZ 1990.

Conclusion: Black seems to have many ways to counter the early f3 plan, though some caution is needed in order to avoid positions where White has managed to weaken the central e4- and d5-pawns.

B2)

9 ♘f4 ♘a6 *(D)*



10 h4

Here White's alternatives are not good:

a) 10 f3 g5 11 ♘h3 h6 12 ♘f2 d5! and Black's strong centre gives him better chances; for example, 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 ♕b3 ♔g7 15 ♗d2 ♘b8 16 ♖c1 ♘c6 17 ♘a4 ♗d6 18 ♘c5 ♕e7 19 fxe4 fxe4 20 ♘d1 b6 21 ♘a6 ♗d7 ∓ Petkov-Komliakov, Yugoslav Cht 1994.

b) 10 ♕b3 is a bit more unclear: 10...♘c7 11 0-0 ♔h8 12 ♗d2 ♖b8 13 d5 c5 14 a4 ♕e8 15 ♘b5 ♘xb5 16 axb5 ♖a8 17 ♗c3 ♕f7 18 h4 ♘e8 19 g3 ♗f6 20 ♖a3 a6 with activity, Soppe-Benjamin, Oz.com 2000.

10...♘c7 11 d5 *(D)*

This brings about the critical position of this variation. Again, White's alternatives are not as strong as the text-move:

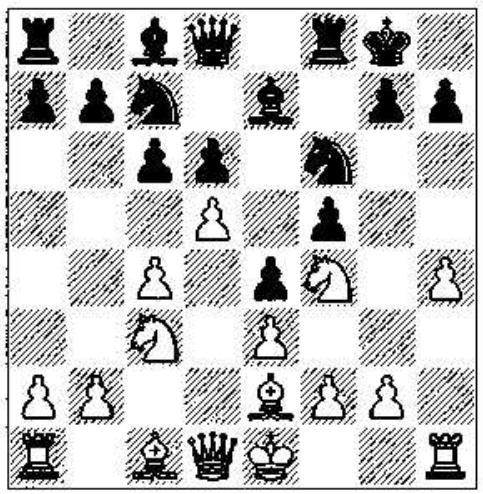
a) 11 ♕b3 ♖b8 12 ♗d2 ♘e6 13 c5 d5 and White's pieces, especially his queen, are not ideally posted in this

closed position: 14 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 15 ♕a4 b6 16 b4 a5! 17 a3 b5 18 ♕c2 a4 19 g3 ♗f7 20 0-0-0 ♗h5 ∓ Kosyrev-Gelman, Moscow Ch 1996.

b) 11 b3 d5 12 g3 ♘e6 13 ♔f1 ♘xf4 14 exf4 ♗e6 and Black is completely OK; for example, 15 ♗e3 ♕e8 16 ♔g2 ♕f7 17 c5 b5 = Skembris-Rukavina, Bor 1983.

c) 11 b4!? ♘e6 12 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 13 g3 ♕e8 14 b5 ♕f7 15 bxc6 bxc6 with a more dynamic position, though Black is OK after 16 ♕a4 c5 17 d5 ♗d7 18 ♕c2 ♖ab8 = Ubilava-Zaichik, Telavi 1982.

B



11...cxd5

Or:

a) 11...c5 closes the centre, and leads to unbalanced play where both players try to achieve a pawn-break against the opponent's pawn-chain: 12 a3 ♘d7 13 g3 ♗f6 (13...♘e5 14 ♗d2 ♗d7 15 b4 b6 seems to be too slow, and White gets positional pressure on the queenside: 16 ♔f1 a6 17 bxc5 bxc5 18 ♔g2 ♕b8 19 ♕c2 ♕a7 20 a4 a5 21 ♘b5 ± Magerramov-Popov, USSR 1979) 14 ♗d2 ♘e5 15 b4 and now Black secures his fair share of the chances with an interesting idea: 15...b5!? 16 cxb5 c4 17 ♕b1 ♕e8 18 a4 ♗b7 19 ♕a2 ♖c8 (Dlugy-Bagirov, Palma de Mallorca 1989) 20 ♖c1 with a very unclear position.

b) 11...a5 has also been played, with the idea of gaining some space on the queenside: 12 a3 ♘a6 13 ♖b1 ♗d7 14 b4 axb4 15 axb4 c5 16 b5 ♘b4 and White enjoys positional pressure on the queenside; for example, 17 ♕b3 ♘e8 18 g3 (18 ♗a3? ♖xa3 −+) 18...♗f6 19 ♗b2 ♗e5 20 ♔f1 ♘f6 21 ♔g2 ± Schwartzman-Levin, Groningen 1992, though in the game Black got some attacking chances on the kingside.

c) 11...♘d7 is the old move, which is playable. Black starts manoeuvring his knights immediately, not closing the centre:

c1) 12 g4 ♘e5! is not something Black need fear.

c2) 12 b3 ♘e5 13 ♗b2 and now:

c21) 13...♗xh4?! 14 dxc6 ♗f6 (or 14...bxc6 15 ♖xh4 ♕xh4 16 ♕xd6 +−) 15 cxb7 ♗xb7 16 ♕c2 ±.

c22) 13...c5 14 h5 ♗f6 and then:

c221) 15 ♕c2 ♕e7 16 a3 ♗d7 17 b4 gives Black a chance to get counterplay with a normal idea in this position-type: 17...b5!? 18 cxb5 (18 ♘xb5 ♘xb5 19 cxb5 ♖fc8 with enough compensation) 18...c4 19 a4? (19 0-0!?) 19...♘d3+ 20 ♗xd3 exd3 21 ♕c1 ♗e5 22 g3 ♘e8! ∓ Illescas-Vladimirov, Logroño 1991.

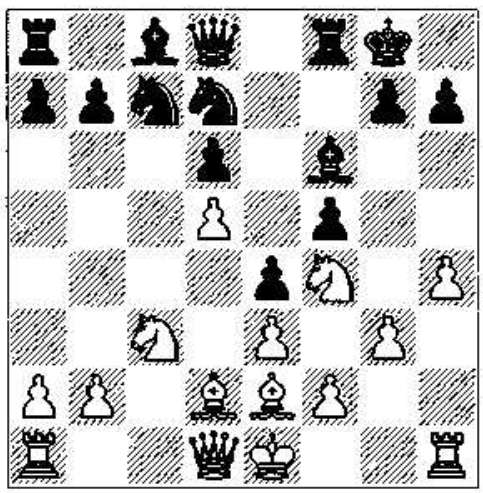
c222) 15 ♕d2 ♗d7 16 ♖d1 ♕e7 17 ♔f1 ♖fd8 18 a4 a6 and White's idea of hindering Black's queenside play

seems quite logical: 19 a5!? ♖ab8 20 ♖a1 b5 21 axb6 ♖xb6 22 ♕c2 ♖db8 23 ♖a3 a5 24 ♗a1 ± Gausel-Bologan, Manila OL 1992.

c3) 12 g3 ♘e5 13 dxc6! (this move has not been the main option for White, though it seems to be quite logical: in an open position, White has more targets to work with) 13...bxc6 14 b3 a5 15 ♗b2 ♘a6 16 ♘a4 ♕c7 17 ♔f1 g6 18 ♔g2 ± Haag-Myers, Australia 1999.

12 cxd5 ♘d7 13 g3 ♗f6 14 ♗d2 *(D)*

B



14...♗e5

Direct kingside expansion is also interesting: 14...♘e5 15 ♔f1 g6 16 ♔g2 h6 17 ♖c1 g5 18 hxg5 hxg5 19 ♘h5 ♗h8 20 ♔h2 ♕e7 with an unclear position, Murugan-Norwood, Calcutta 1992, though Black seems to have the initiative.

15 ♔f1

15 ♖c1 was played in another classic game in this variation: 15...♘f6 16 ♕b3 ♔h8 17 a4 ♘a6 18 ♕a3 ♗d7 19 b4 ♖c8 20 a5?! ♘c7 21 ♕b3 a6! 22 ♗c4 ♕e8 23 ♘ce2 ♘g4 24 ♗c3 ♘b5 (Ruban-Anand, Palma de Mallorca 1989) 25 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 ∓.

15...♘f6

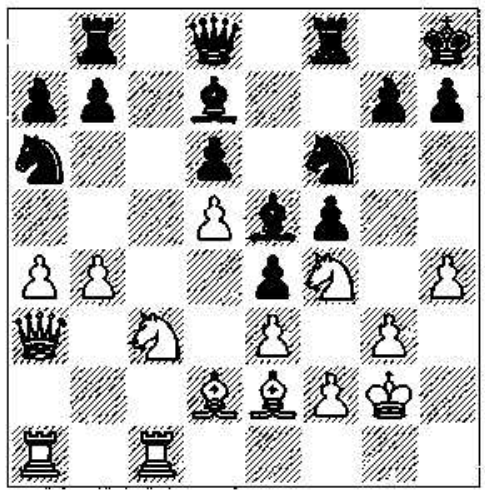
Again, a lot of manoeuvring. White has many weakened squares and this gives Black easy targets and counterplay.

16 ♕b3 ♖b8

16...♔h8!? has also been suggested.

17 a4 ♔h8 18 ♔g2 ♗d7 19 ♖hc1 ♘a6 20 ♕a3 ♘c5 21 b4 ♘a6! *(D)*

W



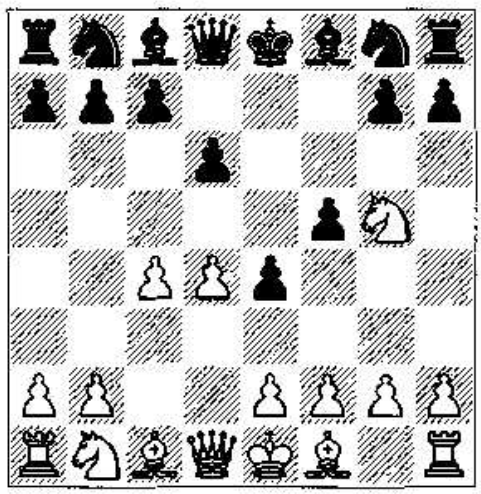
Black has a lot of counterplay, Salov-Romero, Madrid 1992. The remainder of this classic battle was 22 ♖ab1 ♘c7 23 ♗c4?! ♖c8 24 b5 ♗e8 25 ♘ce2 ♗f7 26 ♕a2 h6 27 ♗c3 ♕e7 28 ♗b3?! g5 29 hxg5 hxg5 30 ♘e6 ♘xe6 31 ♗xe5 dxe5 32 dxe6 ♗h5 33 ♘g1 ♖xc1 34 ♖xc1 f4 35 ♕d2 ♘g4! 36 ♕d7 fxe3! 37 ♘h3 ♕f6 38 ♗d1 exf2 0-1.

Conclusion: Black seems to be fine in the main line where White plays ♗e2, ♘f4 and h4. The games by strong players have shown Black the right plans.

4 5th Move Alternatives for White

1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 f5 *(D)*

W



White's early alternatives 5 g3 and 5 f3 are usually quite harmless for Black. In the former line the outpost on g5 does not promise White's knight too many things to do. In general, if White plays f3 too early, his lack of development might be a major problem for him, as we shall see.

Now:

A: 5 g3 31
B: 5 f3 32

Or:

a) 5 g4?! just loses a pawn: 5...h6 6 ♘h3 fxg4 7 ♘f4 ♗f5 8 h3 ♘f6 9 ♘c3 ♘bd7 10 hxg4 ♘xg4 11 ♗g2 ♘gf6, Moran-Striković, Zaragoza 1993.

b) 5 h4 is a rare variation, by which White often plans e3, ♗e2 and ♘h3-f4. There are plenty of transpositional possibilities. Black can choose between:

b1) 5...h6?! is not appropriate, as White gets very good compensation for the pawn: 6 ♘h3 ♕xh4 7 ♘c3 c6 8 g3 ♕d8 (8...♕f6 9 ♘f4 g6 10 g4 fxg4 11 ♗g2 ♗f5 12 ♗xe4 ♘e7 13 ♗g2 ♘a6 14 e4 with enough compensation in the form of good central pawns, Matveeva-Stanciu, Bled wom 1992) 9 ♘f4 ♘a6 (V.Basagić-Dekić, Manila wom OL 1992) and now the simple 10 ♘g6 ♖h7 11 d5 looks best, when Black's pieces are tied up.

b2) 5...♗e7!? attacks the h4-pawn, and so might narrow White's choices: 6 g3 ♘c6 7 ♘h3 ♗f6 8 e3 g6 9 ♘f4 ♘h6 10 ♘c3 0-0 11 ♗e2 ♘e7 12 ♗d2 c5 = Llanos-Dolezal, Buenos Aires 1992.

b3) 5...♘f6 and now:

b31) 6 ♘c3 c6 (6...♘c6 7 e3 g6 8 b4 ♗g7 9 b5 ♘e7 10 g3 h6 11 ♘h3 ♗e6 12 ♖b1 ♗f7 13 ♗e2 ♕d7 14 a4 0-0 15 ♗a3 ♖ac8 16 c5 ♖fd8 is also possible, Cebalo-Čabrilo, Yugoslav Ch 1989) 7 g3 (7 e3 g6 looks quite OK, because after 8 ♗e2 ♗h6 9 ♘h3 ♘a6 10 a3 ♘c7 11 b4 d5 12 c5 0-0 13 g3

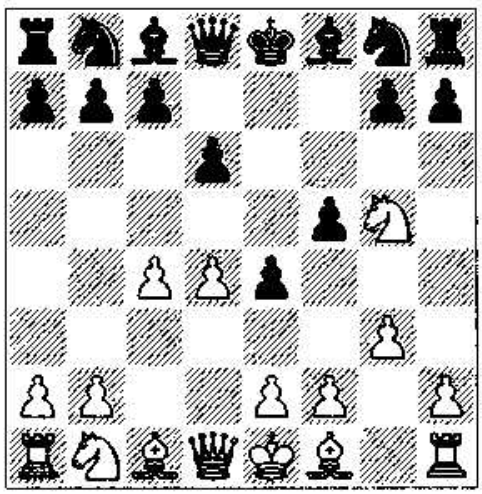
♘e6 ∓ Black's pieces are well placed, Tyni-Lehto, Järvenpää 1996) 7...♘a6 8 ♗g2 ♘c7 9 ♗f4 h6 10 ♘h3 ♗e6 11 ♖c1 ♗xc4 (11...♗e7!? looks natural) 12 ♘xe4 ♗xa2 13 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 14 b3 ♕f7 15 ♖c4 ♘d5 16 ♕c2 ♗xb3 17 ♕xb3 ♘b6 18 ♖c3 ♕xb3 19 ♖xb3 ♔d7 ± J.Christiansen-J.Madsen, Danish Ch (Århus) 1992.

b32) 6 ♘h3 c6 7 ♗g5 (7 ♘c3 ♗e7 8 e3 0-0 9 ♘f4 ♘a6 transposes to Line A of Chapter 3) 7...♗e7 8 e3 ♘a6 9 ♘c3 ♘c7 10 ♘f4 ♘e6 11 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 12 b4 0-0 13 ♖b1 d5 14 c5 b6 is satisfactory for Black, Danner-Plachetka, Prague 1988.

A)

5 g3 *(D)*

B



White has several different move-orders in the early phases of this variation, but they usually transpose to the main lines. The plan with h4, trying to keep the white knight on g5, is a natural set-up that White often adopts if he does not know any theory.

5...♗e7

5...c6!? is worth a try, and after 6 ♘c3 (6 ♘h3 ♘a6 7 ♘c3 transposes to Line C of Chapter 6) Black has a choice:

a) The original development plan 6...♗e7 7 ♘h3 ♗f6!? (7...♘f6 transposes to Chapter 2) 8 ♗g2 ♗e6 is possible, but White found the surprising 9 d5 ♗f7 10 ♕b3 ♕d7 11 ♘g5! and got a big advantage after 11...♘h6 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♗h3! ♗xc3 14 ♕xc3 cxd5 15 cxd5 ♗xd5 16 ♖d1 ♗c6 17 ♗f4 ♖f6 18 ♕b3+ ♔h8 19 ♕a3 ± in Krush-Kosteniuk, Cannes girls U-14 Wch 1997.

b) 6...d5! (justified because White has lost a move with the early g3, and his knight is not yet attacking d5) 7 cxd5 cxd5 8 ♘h3 ♘c6 9 ♗g2 ♗e6 10 0-0 ♘f6 11 ♗g5 ♗e7 12 e3 ♘g4 13 ♘f4 ♗f7 14 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 15 ♕a4+ ♕d7 16 ♕xd7+ ½-½ Fahnenschmidt-Wockenfuss, Bundesliga 1986/7.

6 h4!?

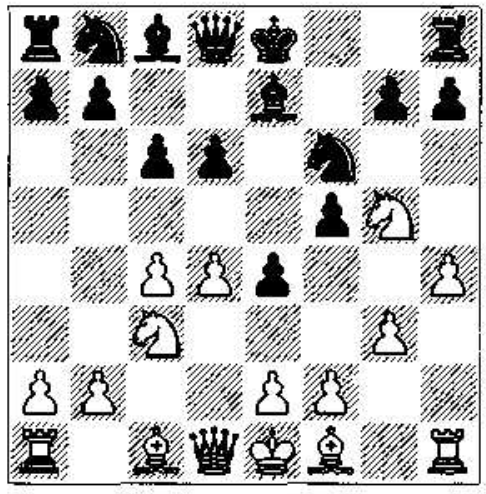
6 ♘h3 ♘f6 7 ♗g2 c6 8 ♘c3 transposes to Chapter 2.

6...♘f6

6...c6!? is again a flexible move, and now 7 ♘c3 ♘a6 8 ♗g2 (8 ♖b1 ♘f6 9 ♗g2 transposes to the main line, while after 8 d5 ♘c7 9 ♗g2 there is also no reason for Black to avoid 9...♘f6) 8...♘c7 9 ♕b3 led to some original play in Praszak-McNab, Koszalin 1997: 9...♘f6 10 f3 h6 11 ♘h3 ♘h5 12 ♔f2 ♘e6 13 d5 ♘c5 14 ♕c2 0-0 15 ♘f4 ♘xf4 16 ♗xf4 exf3 17 exf3 ♕b6 18 ♔f1 ♘d7 19 ♖e1 ♘e5 with a playable position for Black, whose knight is doing most of the work.

7 ♘c3 c6 *(D)*

8 ♗g2



Or:

a) The odd alternative 8 ♗f4 0-0 9 ♕d2 ♘a6 10 d5 ♕b6 11 ♗h3!? is a tricky plan. Only played once, it leads to complications: 11...♘c5 12 ♗e3 ♕b4 13 ♘cxe4 ♕xc4 14 ♘xc5 dxc5 15 d6 ♖d8 16 b3 ♕b5 17 ♗f4 h6 18 e4 hxg5 19 ♗f1 ♘xe4 20 dxe7 ♖e8 21 ♗xb5 ♘xd2 22 ♔xd2 cxb5 23 ♗d6 ± Avshalumov-Titov, USSR 1983.

b) 8 d5 0-0 (8...♘a6 9 ♗g2 0-0 10 0-0 ♘g4 11 ♘h3 ♗d7 12 ♖b1 ♘e5 13 b3 c5 14 ♘f4 ♘c7 15 a4 ♗f6 = Mastrovasilis-Nikolaidis, Greek Ch 1998) 9 e3 ♘g4 10 ♘h3 ♘e5 seems to favour Black, whose pieces find good squares without delay: 11 ♗e2 a5 12 ♘f4 ♘a6 13 b3 ♗f6 14 ♗b2 ♘c5 15 ♖b1 ♕e7 16 ♔f1 g6 17 a3 ♕g7 18 ♕c2 ♗d7 19 ♔g2 ♖fc8 20 b4 axb4 21 axb4 ♘cd3!, Lindinger-Velička, Hamburg 1999.

8...♘a6 9 ♖b1 0-0 10 0-0 ♘c7

Black is well prepared to meet White's plans, and the knight doesn't have any special function on g5.

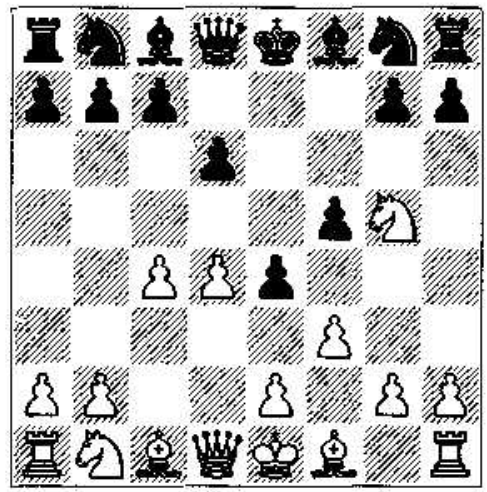
11 b4 h6 12 ♘h3 ♗e6 13 c5 ♘cd5 14 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 15 ♕c2 a5 16 a3 axb4 17 axb4 ♗f6

∓ Praszak-Markowski, Polish Cht 1998.

Conclusion: The plans with an early h4 are not dangerous for Black. However, there are some tricks based on the white knight on g5 that Black should avoid.

B)

5 f3 *(D)*



White tries to attack Black's centre at once with the idea ♘h3-f2 and ♘c3. Black can either develop normally, or keep the e7-square for his queen, thus overprotecting the e4-pawn.

5...♗e7!

5...♘f6 is another important set-up, by which Black reserves e7 for his queen. 6 ♘c3 and now:

a) 6...h6 7 ♘h3 g5 8 ♘f2 (8 fxe4 fxe4 9 g3 c6 10 d5 ♕e7 11 ♗g2 ♗f5 12 0-0 ♗g6 = Schmidt-Marchio, Bad Wildungen 1998) 8...♕e7 9 fxe4 fxe4 is the main position of the plan where White directly attacks the e4-pawn. He has the following options:

a1) 10 ♗e3 ♗g7 11 ♕c2 (11 g3 c6 12 ♕b3 0-0 13 ♗g2 ♗f5 14 0-0-0 ♘a6 15 h3 ♗g6 16 g4 d5 was unclear in Romanishin-Balashov, Odessa 1974) 11...♗f5 12 h3 (12 g3 c6 13 ♗g2 d5 14 0-0 0-0 =) 12...c6 13 g4 ♗g6 14 d5!? (14 ♗g2 d5 =) 14...cxd5 15 cxd5 ♘bd7 16 ♗g2 ♖c8 17 ♕a4 (17 ♕b3 b6!?; 17 ♗xa7 ♘xd5!?) 17...a6 18 0-0 0-0 19 ♖ad1 ♖fe8 is unclear, Touzane-Douven, Sochi 1990.

a2) 10 ♕c2!? ♗g7 (10...♗f5 11 g4! ♘xg4 12 ♘xg4 ♗xg4 13 ♘d5 ♕f7 14 ♕xe4+ ♗e6 15 ♗h3, Sutter-Werner, Switzerland 1994) 11 ♘fxe4 ♘xe4 (11...c6!? 12 e3 0-0 13 ♗d3 ♘xe4 14 ♗xe4 ♘d7 with enough compensation) 12 ♘d5 ♕f7 13 ♕xe4+ ♔d8 14 e3 (14 ♗d2 ♖e8 15 ♕d3 ♗f5 16 ♕c3 c5) 14...♖e8 (14...♖f8 15 ♗e2) 15 ♕d3 ♗f5 16 ♕d1! (16 ♕d2 ♗e6 is OK for Black, Levin-Klimenok, USSR corr. Cht 1991) 16...♗e6 (16...♖f8!?) 17 ♗e2 ♗xd5 18 ♗h5 ♖xe3+ 19 ♗xe3 ♕e6 20 cxd5 ♕xe3+ 21 ♕e2 ±.

a3) 10 e3 and then:

a31) 10...c6 11 ♗e2 h5 12 0-0 g4 13 ♗d2 ♗h6 14 ♕c2 ♗f5 15 ♘h3 ♗g6 (15...gxh3!?) 16 ♘f4 with a slight advantage for White, Petran-Higatsberger, Budapest 1992.

a32) 10...♗g7 and now:

a321) 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 0-0 c6 13 ♖b1 (13 b4 a6 14 a4 ♗f5 15 ♗a3 ♘bd7 16 ♖c1 ♔h8 17 ♘h1 ♗g6 18 ♘g3 ♕e6 19 b5 c5 20 ♘d5! ♖ac8 21 dxc5 dxc5 22 ♗b2 ± Ardiansyah-Yrjölä, Thessaloniki OL 1988) 13...♗f5 14 b4 ♘bd7 15 c5 ♔h8 16 ♗d2 dxc5 17 bxc5 b6 18 cxb6 axb6 19 ♘h1 ♗g6 ∓ Siegel-Sokolov, Viernheim 1995.

a322) 11 g4!? h5 12 gxh5 ♗f5 13 ♗g2 (13 ♗e2!?) 13...♘bd7 14 ♕a4 0-0 15 0-0 c5 16 dxc5 dxc5 17 ♗d2 ♖ad8 18 ♕c2 ♖fe8 19 ♘h1! ± Meister-Tischbierek, Bundesliga 1991/2.

b) 6...♘c6!? is maybe most to the point:

b1) 7 fxe4 and now:

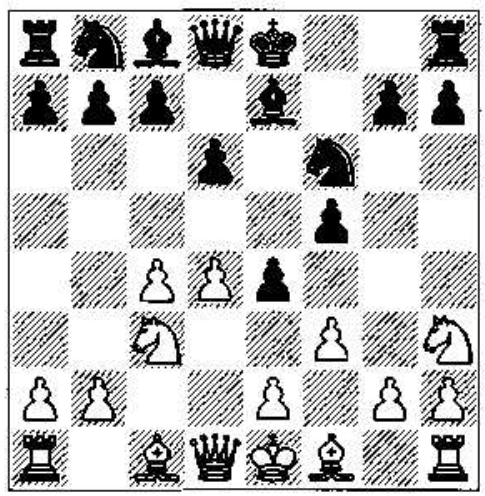
b11) 7..fxe4 8 d5 (not 8 ♘gxe4?! ♘xe4 9 ♘xe4 ♕h4+ 10 ♘g3 ♕xd4 ∓) 8...♘e5 9 g3 forces Black to try some unclear counterplay as the e4-pawn is hard to keep.

b12) 7...h6! 8 d5 (8 ♘h3 fxe4 9 ♘f2 ♗f5 is OK for Black) 8...♘e5 9 ♘e6 ♗xe6 10 dxe6 fxe4 is good for Black.

b2) 7 g3 h6 8 ♘h3 g5 9 ♘f2 exf3 10 exf3 ♗g7 = Matamoros-Klinger, Gausdal jr Wch 1986.

6 ♘h3 ♘f6 7 ♘c3 *(D)*

B



7...0-0

7...c6!? is another option, and it is fully playable:

a) 8 d5 0-0 9 ♘f2 and now:

a1) 9...♘bd7 and then:

a11) 10 fxe4 ♘g4!? 11 ♘d3 (11 ♘xg4 fxg4 with counterplay due to

the very good knight on e5) 11...fxe4 12 ♘xe4 cxd5 13 cxd5 ♕a5+ 14 ♘c3 ♘de5 with activity.

a12) 10 f4 ♕b6 11 e3 ♘c5 12 ♗e2 a5, Nikolaev-Titov, Budapest 1990, is another typical possibility.

a2) 9...♕e8! 10 g3 ♗d8! (the bishop manoeuvre ...♗e7-d8-b6 targets the weakened dark squares f2, e3 and d4 behind the white pawn-centre, and is a normal plan in this position-type) 11 ♗g2 exf3 12 ♗xf3 ♘bd7 13 dxc6 ♘e5 14 ♗g2 bxc6 15 ♕xd6 ♗b7 16 ♕b4 ♖b8 17 0-0 ♘fd7 18 b3 ♗b6 gave Black good compensation in Engqvist-Agrest, Stockholm 1993.

b) 8 e3 0-0 9 ♗e2 (the alternative 9 fxe4 fxe4 10 ♘f4 ♘a6 11 ♗e2 ♘c7 12 d5 g5 13 ♘h5 ♗f5 14 0-0 ♗g6 is good for Black, Ree-Quinteros, Amsterdam 1977) 9...♘a6 10 0-0 transposes to Line B1 of Chapter 3.

c) 8 fxe4 ♘xe4 9 ♘xe4 fxe4 (Bischoff-Sakaev, Brno 1992) 10 ♘f4 0-0 11 e3 ♗h4+ 12 g3 ♗g5 13 ♗g2 ♗xf4 14 exf4 ♘d7 15 0-0 ♘f6 = Sakaev.

d) 8 ♘f2 d5 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 fxe4 fxe4 11 ♗g5 ♘c6 12 e3 ♗e6 13 ♗e2 ♕d7 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♗f4 ♖ac8 = Varga-Vaulin, Paks 1999.

e) 8 ♗g5 ♘a6 9 e3 (9 ♕d2 0-0 10 e3 ♘c7 11 0-0-0 d5 12 cxd5 ♘fxd5 13 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 14 ♗c4 ♗e6 15 ♘f2 ♘xc3 16 ♕xc3 exf3 17 gxf3 ♗xc4 18 ♕xc4+ ♔h8 ∓ Kelly-Speelman, British Ch (Torquay) 1998) 9...exf3 10 ♕xf3 (10 gxf3!?) 10...0-0 11 ♗d3 ♘g4 12 ♗f4 ♗h4+ 13 ♔d2 ♖e8 is much better for Black, Danielsen-Davies, Danish Ch 1988.

8 ♘f2

8 g3 c5 9 ♗g2 cxd4 10 ♕xd4 ♘c6 11 ♕d1 exf3 12 exf3 ♕b6 13 ♘f2 ♗e6 14 b3 d5 ∓ Birens-Delchev, Bastia 1998.

8...♔h8

In some positions Black is ready to give up the e4-pawn, because White has not developed yet, and his kingside pawns are weakened.

8...♘c6!? is a very active alternative:

a) 9 fxe4 fxe4 10 d5 (10 ♘fxe4 ♘xe4 11 ♘xe4 d5! gives Black a very active position) 10...♘e5 11 ♕b3 ♗f5 with a mess.

b) 9 e3 exf3 10 gxf3 ♘h5 11 f4 g6 12 ♖g1 ♘g7 13 a3 ♗h4 with counterplay, Pieterse-Nogueiras, Tilburg 1992.

9 ♗g5 c6 10 ♕b3

10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 fxe4 ♕b6! with a lot of counterplay.

10...d5 11 0-0-0 dxc4 12 ♕xc4 ♘d5

12...b5!? has also been suggested.

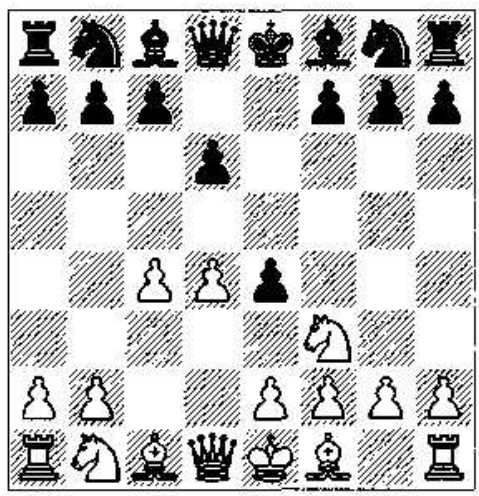
13 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 14 ♘xd5 cxd5 15 ♕b3 ♗e6

∓ Schwanek-Cifuentes, Buenos Aires 1991.

Conclusion: Black has many plans to meet the very early f3. There is no need to be afraid of the loss of the e4-pawn, as Black gets a very active position by focusing on good development.

5 4th Move Alternatives for White

1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 *(D)*



White has tried also some totally different set-ups against the black advance in the centre.

The flexible 4 ♘g1 tries to weaken the advanced black pawns further, while developing the knight via e2 to f4, for example. Generally Black copes well with these positional plans, and 4 ♘g1 has never been a popular choice for White.

4 ♘fd2 aims at pressurizing the centre more calmly behind the pawn-front. Against this plan we have chosen Khalifman's 6...c5 as the main line, as this sharp move leads to some active play by both sides and Black hasn't had too many problems so far.

Thus we discuss:

A: 4 ♘g1!? 35

B: 4 ♘fd2!? 37

A)

4 ♘g1!?

This move has been played mainly by Smbat Lputian. As the route of the knight to f4 is as long through g1 as g5, this quite often transposes back to the 4 ♘g5 main lines.

4...f5 *(D)*

Or:

a) 4...h6 5 ♘c3 ♘f6 is also possible, transposing to Line A of Chapter 32.

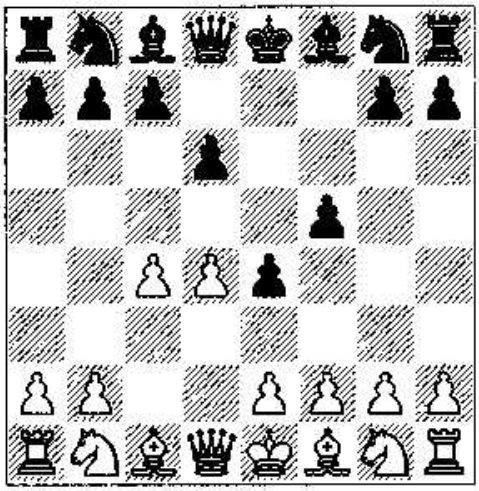
b) 4...g6!? is an interesting alternative which has only been played a few times. 5 ♘c3 and now:

b1) 5...f5 is playable: 6 ♘h3 (6 h4 ♗g7 7 ♗g5 ♕d7 8 e3 ♘c6 9 g4 fxg4 10 ♘xe4 ♕f7 11 ♕d2 ♘ge7 12 ♗d3 h6 13 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 14 ♘e2 0-0 15 0-0-0 ♗f5 ∓ Ward-King, British Ch (Blackpool) 1988) 6...♗g7 7 g3 ♘f6 8 ♗g2 0-0 9 0-0 and now 9...c5 10 dxc5 dxc5 11 ♗e3 ♘a6 12 f3 ♗e6 13 ♕b3 exf3 14 ♗xf3 ♘g4 gave Black some unclear counterplay in Elbilia-Delchev, Bastia 1998.

b2) 5...♗g7 6 ♘xe4 ♕h4 7 ♘d2 (7 ♘g3 ♕xd4 8 ♕xd4 ♗xd4 9 ♘f3 ♗g7

∓) 7...♕xd4 8 ♘gf3 ♕b6 9 g3 ♘f6 10 ♗g2 0-0 11 0-0 a5 12 b3 ♘c6 (or 12...♘d5!? 13 cxd5 ♗xa1 14 ♘c4 ♕a6 ∓) 13 ♗b2 a4 = Gretarsson-Van der Wiel, Wijk aan Zee 1996.

W



5 ♘c3

Or:

a) After 5 h4 it is probably best for White to seek transpositions back to 4 ♘g5 variations, as the independent tries have not been too good: 5...♗e7 (5...♘f6 6 g3 c6 7 ♗g5 ♗e7 8 e3 0-0 9 h5 ♘a6 10 ♘c3 ♘c7 11 ♘h3 ♘e6 12 ♗h4 ♘g4 13 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 = Hofman-Hartoch, Berlin 1988) 6 g3 c6 7 ♘c3 ♘a6 8 ♘h3 ♘f6 9 e3?! 0-0 10 ♖b1 ♘c7 11 b4 ♔h8 12 ♗d2 ♗d7 13 ♗e2 ♕e8 ∓ Hoffmeyer-Schlemmermeyer, 2nd Bundesliga 1994/5.

b) 5 g3 c6 6 d5 (6 ♘c3 ♘a6 7 ♗g2 ♗e7 8 ♘h3 transposes to note 'b' to Black's 5th move) 6...c5, fixing the central pawns, led immediately to an original position in Rogozenko-Nistiriuc, Kishinev 1993: 7 ♘c3 ♘f6 8 ♗g2 g6 9 ♘h3 ♗g7 10 ♘f4 ♕e7 11 h4 0-0 12 0-0 ♘g4 13 e3 ♘e5 14 ♕e2 ♘a6 15 a3 ♘c7 with no problems for Black.

5...♘f6

Or:

a) 5...♘d7 is an independent try: 6 ♘h3 ♗e7 7 e3 ♘df6!? (this original positioning of the knights might be quite playable, as they both have some good squares) 8 b4 ♘h6 9 ♘f4 0-0 10 h4 ♗d7 11 ♕b3 ♔h8 12 ♗e2 ♘fg4 13 g3 ♕c8 14 ♗b2 ♗e8 15 d5 ♗f7 16 ♘b5 ♘e5 17 ♘d4 ♗f6 and Black is OK, Lputian-Eingorn, Kharkov 1985.

b) 5...♗e7 6 ♘h3 c6 7 g3 (7 e3 ♘f6 8 ♗e2 ♘a6 9 ♘f4 0-0 transposes to Line B2 of Chapter 3) 7...♘a6 8 ♗g2 ♘c7 9 f3 exf3 10 exf3 ♗f6 was not a success in Lputian-Mokry, Manila OL 1992, where White obtained an advantage with active play: 11 ♘f4 g6 12 d5 ♗xc3+ 13 bxc3 c5 14 0-0 ♘f6 15 ♖e1+ ♔f7 16 ♖b1 ♖e8 17 ♘e6! with the initiative.

c) 5...c6!? is recommended by Ribli as the most precise move-order.

6 ♗g5

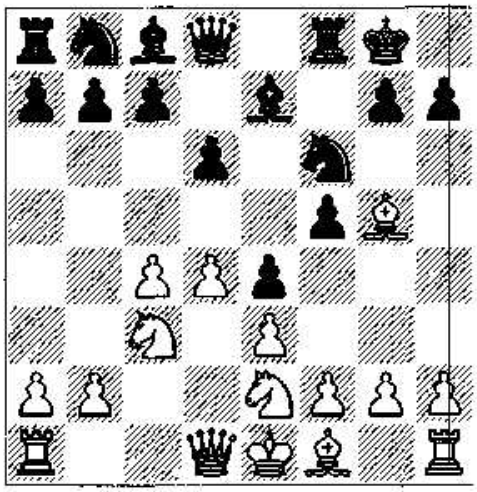
6 ♘h3 ♗e7 transposes to Line A of Chapter 6. The text-move offers White some chances of an advantage.

6...♗e7 7 e3 0-0 8 ♘ge2 *(D)*

White has developed his pieces a bit differently from the main lines.

8...c6

8...h6!? represents one improvement for Black, clearing the kingside at once: 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 ♘f4 c6 (10...♘c6!? 11 h4 ♘e7 12 h5 c6 13 ♕b3 ♕a5 14 0-0-0 ♖d8 15 ♗e2 ♗g5 16 d5 ♗xf4 17 exf4 cxd5 18 cxd5 ♗d7 19 ♖d4 ♖ab8 20 f3 exf3 21 ♗xf3 b5 ∓ Uusi-Akopian, USSR 1967) 11 h4 ♘a6 12



h5 ♘c7 13 g3 ♘e6 14 ♗e2 ♘xf4 15 gxf4 ♗e6 16 ♕c2 c5 17 dxc5 dxc5 18 ♖d1 ♕a5 ∓ Puc-Milić, Novi Sad 1955. White has not found clear compensation for the loss of the bishop-pair.

9 ♘f4 ♘g4

The last alternative worth trying is 9...♘a6!? 10 h4 (10 ♗e2 ♘c7 11 ♕b3 h6 12 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13 ♘g6 ♖e8 14 h4 ♔h7 15 h5 ♖b8 is nothing for Black to be afraid of, Shvedchikov-Iashvili, Moscow 1991) 10...♘c7 11 ♕b3 ♖b8 12 ♗e2 ♘e6? (12...h6!? is possible) 13 c5! d5 14 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 15 ♗f4 ± Lputian-Tischbierek, Dortmund 1992.

10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 11 h4 ♘d7 12 ♕d2 a6 13 a4 b6 14 ♗e2 ♘df6 15 a5 b5 16 cxb5 cxb5 17 ♘cd5 ♘xd5 18 ♘xd5 ♕d8 19 g3

White has a slight advantage, Lputian-Olafsson, Dortmund 1988.

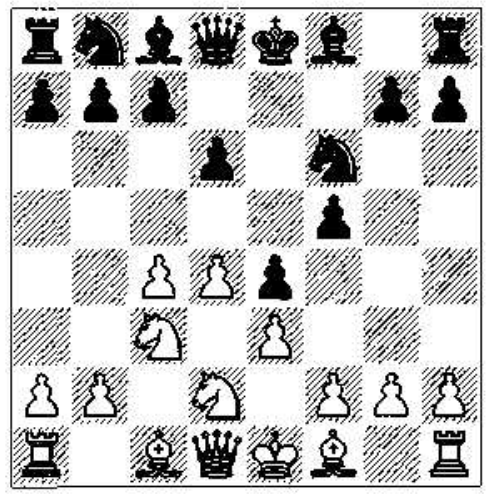
Conclusion: White has had some success with the surprising 4 ♘g1. However, there are not many players who choose it as White, and it is also difficult to believe that it should really be a problem.

B)

4 ♘fd2!?

This is an interesting alternative, popularized by Rogers, to the much more studied 4 ♘g5. Black seems to have no special problems, as the d2-knight does not usually have a good future ahead of it. However, the most critical positions have only been tested a few times, so there might be room for new ideas.

4...f5 5 e3 ♘f6 6 ♘c3 *(D)*



6...c5!

Otherwise:

a) 6...c6 7 ♗e2 (7 b4 a6 8 ♕b3 c5 9 bxc5 dxc5 10 d5 ♗d6 11 ♗b2 ♘bd7 12 ♗e2 0-0 13 g4 ♘e5 14 gxf5 ♗xf5 is a dynamic position with a lot to play for, Alterman-Greenfeld, Beersheba 1991) 7...g6 8 0-0 ♗h6 9 b4 0-0 10 b5 ♖e8 11 ♘b3 ♘bd7 12 ♕c2 ♕c7 13 ♗d2 c5 = Boleslavsky-Bronstein, Zurich Ct 1953.

b) 6...g6 is a more traditional approach which is also viable. 7 ♗e2 (7 b4 ♗g7 8 c5?! d5 ∓ Dlugy-Kavalek, New York 1984) 7...♗g7 8 b4 (8 f3

exf3 9 ♗xf3 0-0 10 0-0 ♘c6 11 ♖e1 ♔h8 = Ribli-Polugaevsky, Budapest 1975) 8...0-0 and now:

b1) 9 0-0 ♗e6 10 f3 exf3 11 ♗xf3 d5! 12 ♘b3 b6 13 a4 ♘c6 14 b5 ♘e7 15 ♗a3 ♖e8 16 ♘c1 ♖c8 gives Black comfortable play, Tozer-Speelman, London Lloyds Bank 1992.

b2) 9 ♗b2 ♘c6 (9...c6!? = *ECO*) 10 b5 ♘e7 11 ♕b3 ♗e6 12 a4 c5 13 dxc5 dxc5 14 0-0-0 ♕c7 15 g4! ± Veingold-Adams, Manila OL 1992.

b3) 9 ♘b3 ♗e6 10 ♕c2 ♘bd7 11 ♗b2 c6 12 0-0 ♗f7 13 b5 c5 14 ♖fd1 cxd4 15 ♖xd4 ♘g4 16 ♗xg4 ♗xd4 17 ♘xd4 fxg4 18 ♘xe4 ♘e5 19 c5 dxc5 20 ♕xc5 with enough play for the exchange, Alburt-Zaichik, Philadelphia 1993.

7 ♗e2

Alternatively:

a) 7 f3?! has been played, though it seems quite risky: 7...cxd4 8 exd4 ♘c6 (8...e3!? is the most critical approach) 9 fxe4 fxe4 (9...♘xd4!?) 10 ♘dxe4 ♘xe4 11 ♘xe4 ♕h4+ 12 ♘g3 ♕xd4 13 ♕xd4 ♘xd4 14 ♗d3 ♘c6 (14...♗e6 15 0-0 0-0-0 16 ♗g5 ♖e8 17 ♖ae1 ♔c7 18 ♖e4 ♘c6 19 ♖fe1 ♘e5 20 ♗f1 ♗e7 21 ♗f4 ♗f6 22 c5! ± Blagojević-Okhotnik, Prague 1988) 15 0-0 (15 ♗e4 ♗e6 16 b3 ♗e7 =) 15...♘e5 16 ♗e2 ♗e6 with counterplay.

b) 7 d5?! gives Black the e5-square, and is not to be recommended. 7...g6 and now:

b1) 8 ♗e2 ♗g7 9 f4 exf3 10 ♘xf3 0-0 11 0-0 ♘g4 12 e4 f4 13 h3 ♘e5 14 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 (14...dxe5!?) 15 ♗g4 ♘a6 16 a3 ♘c7 17 ♕f3 ♖b8 18 ♘e2 b5 (18...g5!?) 19 ♗xc8 ♕xc8 20 ♗xf4 bxc4 21 ♕g3 ♖b3 is OK for Black, Pastor-Bereziuk, Frydek Mistek 1998.

b2) 8 b3 ♗g7 (the sharp 8...♗h6!? 9 ♗b2 0-0, stopping f3 and aiming to play ..f4, is also possible) 9 ♗b2 ♘bd7 and now:

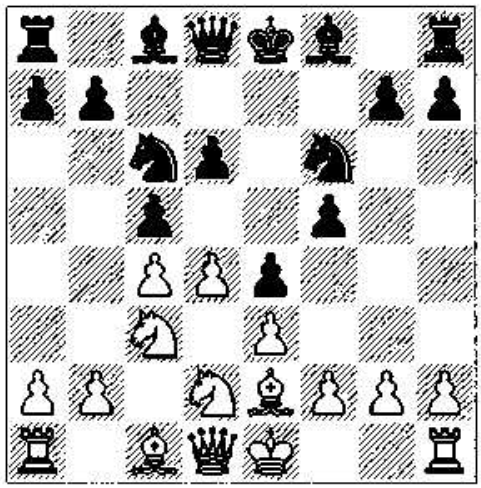
b21) 10 ♕c2 a6 11 ♗e2 ♕e7 12 h3 ♘e5 13 0-0-0 0-0 14 a4?! (14 f4 exf3 15 gxf3 ♘f7 16 ♘f1 f4! ∓) 14...♗d7 15 ♖de1 ♖ae8 16 ♔b1 (16 f3 exf3 17 gxf3 ♘f7 18 ♗d3 f4! ∓) 16...♘d3! 17 ♗xd3 exd3 18 ♕xd3 ♘e4 19 ♖hf1 (19 ♘dxe4 fxe4 20 ♕e2 b5 21 cxb5 axb5 22 axb5 ♖b8 ∓) 19...b5! 20 cxb5 axb5 21 axb5 (21 ♘xb5 ♗xb5 22 axb5 ♗xb2 23 ♔xb2 ♕g7+ 24 ♔c2 ♖a8 wins for Black) 21...♗xc3! 22 ♗xc3 ♗xb5 23 ♘c4 ♖b8 ∓ Lautier-Rogers, Groningen 1988.

b22) 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 ♕c2 ♘e5 12 h3 ♗d7 13 0-0-0 ♕e7 14 ♖de1 a6 15 f4 is a better try for White: 15...exf3 16 gxf3 ♘f7 17 ♗d3 ♖ae8 (after 17...f4?!, 18 exf4 attacks the black queen; but 17...b5!? seems logical) 18 f4 ♘h5 19 ♖hg1 ♕d8 20 ♖e2 ♖e7 21 ♘f1 ♘h6 22 ♘g3 ♘xg3 23 ♖xg3 ½-½ Hausner-Mokry, Zlin 1995.

c) White can also play 7 ♘b3 immediately, when Black has 7...♗e7!? (7...♘c6 8 f4 cxd4 leads to an original position: 9 ♘xd4 ♗e7 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♔h8 12 h3 d5 13 cxd5 ♘xd5 14 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 15 ♘b5 ♕c5 ∓ Lewis-McNab, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1990) 8 dxc5 dxc5 9 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10 ♗d2 ♗e6 11 ♖c1 b6 12 ♘e2 ♗f7 13 ♗c3 ♘bd7 14 ♘d2 ♗d6 15 ♘f4 ♗e5 16 h4 ♔e7 with a nice queenless middlegame, Nikolac-Belotti, Mitropa Cup (Portorož) 1998.

7...♘c6 *(D)*

W



8 ♘b3

8 d5 is the older option, but Black has enough good squares in the centre: 8...♘e5 9 f4 (9 0-0 g6 10 f3 exf3 11 ♘xf3 ♘xf3+ 12 ♗xf3 ♗g7 is equal, Vogel-Hodgson, Bundesliga 1993/4) 9...exf3 10 ♘xf3 ♘fg4! 11 0-0 ♗e7, and then:

a) 12 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 13 e4 0-0 14 ♗f4?! (14 ♗e3 =) 14...♘g6 15 exf5 ♘xf4 16 ♖xf4 ♗xf5 17 ♗g4 (17 ♗d3 ♗xd3 18 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 19 ♕xd3 ♗f6 ∓) 17...♗g6! ∓ Lputian-Lukin, Blagoveshchensk 1988.

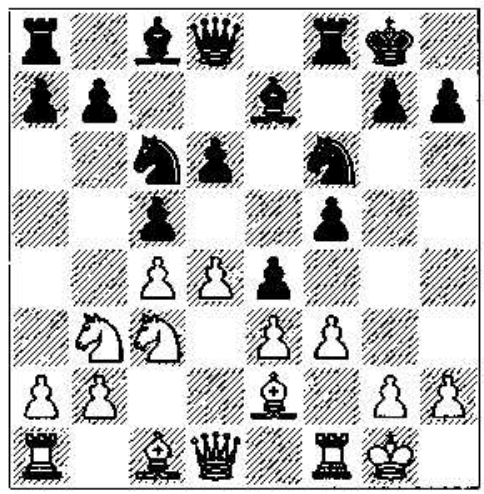
b) 12 h3 ♘xf3+ 13 gxf3 (13 ♗xf3 ♘e5 14 ♗h5+ g6 15 ♗e2 0-0 16 e4 ♗g5 =) 13...♘e5 14 f4 ♘g6 15 ♗d3 0-0 ½-½ Kakageldiev-Lukin, Frunze 1989.

8...♗e7 9 f3

The main alternative is 9 0-0 0-0 10 f4 b6 11 h3 (after 11 ♗d2 a5 12 d5 ♘b4 13 a3 ♘a6 14 ♖b1 ♗d7 15 ♘a1 ♘e8 16 ♘c2 ♗f6 17 g4 g6 18 g5 ♗g7 19 ♕e1 ♘ec7 20 ♘a2 ♕e7 Black has no special problems, as there is always the possibility ...b5, Meszaros-Richtrova, Czech Cht 1996/7) 11...♗b7 (11...a5!? is also more logical here, as the bishop is better placed on c8 to meet the later g4 advance) 12 d5 ♘b8 13 g4, when White is slightly better, which was confirmed in the instructive game Rogers-Hartoch, Wijk aan Zee 1985: 13...g6 14 ♖f2 ♖f7 15 ♖g2 ♗c8 16 ♘d2 ♗f8 17 b3 ♗g7 18 ♗b2 ♘bd7 19 g5 ♘e8 20 h4 ♔f8 21 h5 ♔e7 22 ♕c2 ♘f8 23 h6 ♗h8 24 ♘dxe4 fxe4 25 ♕xe4+ ♔d7 26 ♗g4+ ♔c7 27 ♘b5+ ♔b7 28 ♗xc8+ ♖xc8 29 ♗xh8 ♕d7 30 ♕f3 a6 31 ♘a3 ♘c7 32 e4 ♔a7 33 ♗f6 ♕e8 34 e5 ♘d7 35 exd6 ♘xf6 36 gxf6 ♘a8 37 ♖e2 ♕f8 38 ♖e7+ ♔b8 39 ♖ae1 ♖d8 40 d7 1-0.

9...0-0 10 0-0 *(D)*

B



10...b6

Or:

a) 10...exf3?! 11 ♗xf3 ♗d7 12 ♗d2 ♖e8 13 ♘d5 cxd4 14 exd4 ♘xd5 15 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 16 ♗f7 ♖f8 17 ♕h5 ♗e8 18 ♗xe8 ♖xe8 19 ♕xf5 is much better for White, Pachman-Hort, Hamburg 1980.

b) 10...a5!? at once is also an interesting possibility that has not been tested.

c) 10...♕e8 11 ♘d5 cxd4 12 fxe4 (12 ♘c7 ♕d8 13 ♘xa8 d3 ∓; 12 ♘xd4 ♘xd5 13 cxd5 ♘xd4 ∓) 12...d3 is speculative. After 13 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 14 ♕xd3 ♕xe4 15 ♕xd6 ♖d8 16 ♕f4 ♕xf4 17 exf4 a5 Black's initiative gave him sufficient compensation in Mishra-Norwood, Dhaka 1993, but 13 ♗xd3 fxe4 14 ♗c2!? is more critical.

d) 10...♔h8 is the main alternative:

d1) 11 a3 a5 12 a4 ♘b4 13 ♗d2 ♗e6 is close to equal, and Black even achieved an advantage after 14 fxe4 fxe4 15 ♗e1 b6 16 d5 ♗f7 17 ♘d2 ♗g6 in Klimm-Agrest, Berlin 1993.

d2) 11 ♕c2 cxd4 12 exd4 ♕b6 (12...d5!? Khalifman) 13 ♕d1 exf3 14 ♖xf3 ♗d7 15 ♗e3 ♘g4 16 ♘d5 ♕d8 17 ♗f4 ± Rossiter-McNab, Dublin Z 1993.

d3) 11 fxe4 fxe4 (11...♘xe4!? is a Khalifman recommendation that has never been tested) 12 dxc5 dxc5 13 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 14 ♘d2 ± Crouch-McNab, Scottish Ch 1997.

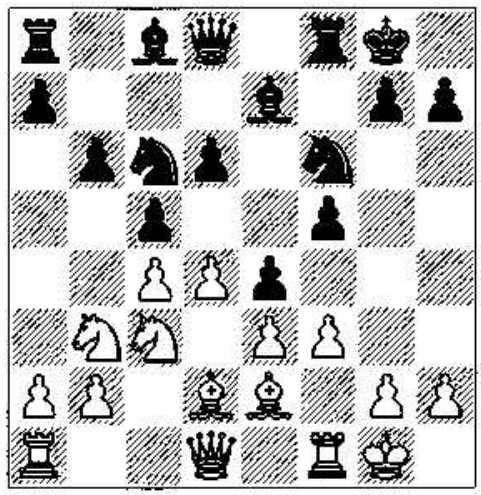
11 ♗d2 *(D)*

This brings about a critical position. Alternatives:

a) 11 fxe4 ♘xe4 12 ♗f3 (12 ♘xe4 fxe4 13 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 14 ♕c2 ♗f5 =) 12...♘xc3 13 bxc3 ♗d7 (13...♗b7 14 ♗d5+ ♔h8 15 ♖b1 ± with a pawn position closely reminiscent of a Nimzo-Indian) 14 ♗d5+ ♔h8 is given by Khalifman as unclear. Both sides have their trumps, as White's active bishop on d5 compensates for his pawn weaknesses.

b) After 11 ♕c2 ♗b7 12 a3 Black played the thematic queenside counter 12...a5 in Dreckmann-Oepen, Bundesliga 1986/7, and this scared White into making a short draw: 13 ♘b5 ♘a7 14 ♘c3 ♘c6 15 ♘b5 ½-½.

B



11...a5! 12 fxe4

12 a4!? might be possible.

12...a4! 13 ♘c1 fxe4 14 ♘xa4 cxd4 15 exd4 d5!

15...♘xd4 16 ♗e3 ♘xe2+ 17 ♘xe2 ±.

16 ♗e3 ♔h8

Now:

a) 17 ♘c3?! is fine for Black, Agdestein-Khalifman, Narva ECC 1998.

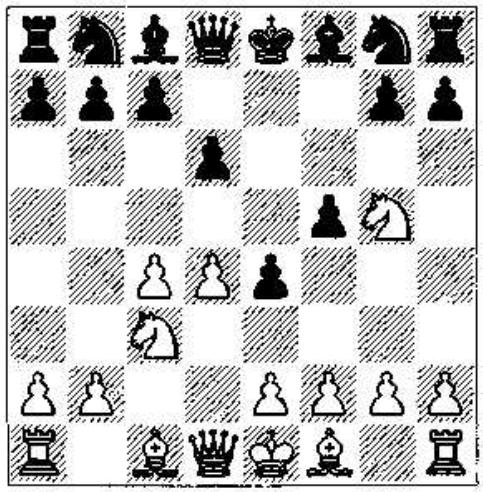
b) The critical try is 17 b3!? dxc4 18 bxc4 ♘xd4 19 ♘xb6 (19 ♕xd4 ♖xa4 20 ♕xb6 ♕xb6 21 ♗xb6 ♗a6 =) 19...♘xe2+ 20 ♕xe2 (20 ♘xe2 ♖a3 with enough compensation) 20...♗g4 21 ♕e1 ♖a6, when Black's active pieces compensate for the material deficit.

Conclusion: Although 6...c5 has not been played much, it seems to offer Black a very active position.

6 What Else Can Black Play?

This section shows some alternative plans for Black, differing from the main repertoire introduced above. It is worth noting that there are many transpositions from these alternative variations back to the main lines, which means that the reader should be familiar with the main lines anyhow. However, the plans with an early ...c5 (Line A) as well as the plans with an early ...h6 (Line B) don't have as much theory to be remembered as the main lines, which might make them a good choice for players wishing to build a repertoire with minimal effort.

1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 f5 5 ♘c3 *(D)*



B

Now:

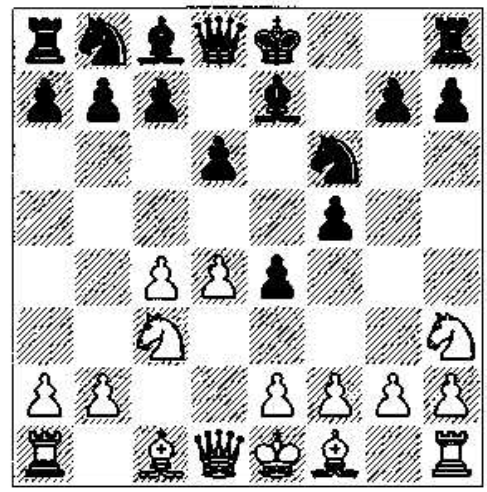
A: 5...♗e7 41
B: 5...h6 43
C: 5...c6 45

In Line A (and to a lesser degree Line B) we are primarily interested in plans with ...c5.

A)

5...♗e7 6 ♘h3 ♘f6 *(D)*

6...c5!? has been tried here, and it is by no means refuted: 7 dxc5 dxc5 8 ♕xd8+ ♗xd8 9 ♘b5 (9 ♗e3 is one suggested improvement) 9...♗a5+ 10 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 11 ♔xd2 ♘a6 12 e3 ♘f6 13 ♗e2 ♔e7 leads to an equal position, Portisch-Larsen, Rotterdam Ct (8) 1977.



W

7 g3

Or:

a) 7 ♘f4 c6 8 h4 0-0 9 e3 ♘a6 transposes to Line A of Chapter 3.

b) 7 f3 transposes to Line B of Chapter 4.

c) 7 ♗g5 is the most important of White's independent tries. The plan is to develop the bishop outside the pawn-chain. However, this move gives Black the choice of which minor pieces to exchange:

c1) 7...♘c6!? is also a good-looking plan, as 8 e3 ♘g4 9 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 10 ♗e2 ♘f6 leads to the basic position without dark-squared bishops. White obtained only a small advantage by 11 ♘f4 c6 12 ♕b3 ♕b6 13 ♕a3 a5 14 ♘a4 ♕c7 15 c5! d5 16 ♘b6 in Okrajek-Dubois, Cappelle la Grande 1991.

c2) 7...♗e6!? is again an interesting idea based on switching the bishop to the kingside: 8 e3 (8 ♕b3 ♘bd7!?) 8...♘bd7 and now:

c21) 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 b3 h6 11 ♘f4?! ♗f7 12 h4? c5 13 ♔f1 cxd4 14 exd4 hxg5 15 hxg5 g6 16 gxf6 ♗xf6 ∓ Hawelko-Lukin, Naleczow 1981.

c22) 9 ♕b3 ♖b8 10 ♘f4 ♗f7 11 ♕a4 a6 12 ♗xf6!? ♗xf6 13 g4 fxg4 14 h3 (14 ♘xe4 ♕e7 15 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 16 ♖g1 g5!?) 14...g3 15 fxg3 0-0 16 ♕c2 c5 17 0-0-0 cxd4 18 exd4 b5 gives Black enough counterplay, Alburt-Lukin, Tbilisi 1974.

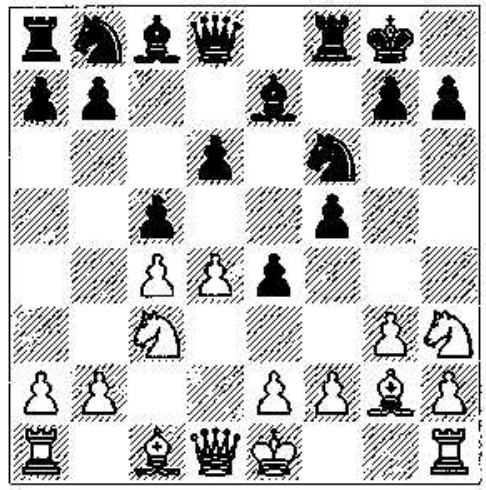
c23) 9 ♘f4 ♗f7 10 ♗e2 ±.

c3) 7...h6!? is a logical move, as Black forces the immediate exchange: 8 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 9 e3 0-0 10 ♘d5 (10 ♗e2 ♘c6 11 a3 ♘e7 12 f4 exf3 13 ♗xf3 g5 ∓ Bellon-Galego, Cienfuegos 1997) 10...c6 11 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 is the basic position with two pairs of minor pieces missing, which makes the game equal: 12 ♗e2 ♕a5+ 13 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 14 ♔xd2 g5 15 f4 exf3 16 gxf3 f4!, Lazić-Botan, Biel 1990.

7...0-0

7...c6 transposes to Chapter 2.

8 ♗g2 c5!? *(D)*



This independent idea, made possible by Black's move-order 6...♘f6, has been used by some strong players. The main plan is to attack the centre in a different way from the normal ...♘a6-c7 and ...d5 plans.

9 d5

9 dxc5!? leads to a type of endgame we have seen before, but the latest examples suggest that White might keep an edge: 9...dxc5 10 ♕xd8 (10 0-0 ♘a6 11 ♘f4 ♘c7 12 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 13 f3 g5 14 ♘fd5 ♘cxd5 15 cxd5 ♘xd5 16 fxe4 ♘xc3 17 bxc3 fxe4 = Cebalo-Tkachev, Solin 1999) 10...♖xd8 is close to equal, but it might be worth taking seriously as Tkachev had some problems in this latest game from this position: 11 ♘f4 ♘a6 12 ♘fd5! ♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 ♗d6 14 ♗g5 ♖e8 15 0-0-0 ± Savchenko-Tkachev, Cannes 2000.

9...♘bd7

9...♘a6 10 0-0 ♘c7 11 f3 exf3 12 exf3 should be compared with note 'a' to Black's 10th move in Line B1 of Chapter 2.

10 0-0 ♘e5 11 b3 ♘e8

Or 11...a6!? 12 a4 ♘h5 13 f3 ♗f6! 14 ♕d2 e3 15 ♕xe3 ♘xc4 16 ♕d3 ♘e5 17 ♕c2 ♗d7 with counterplay, Quinn-Mantovani, Bolzano 1999.

12 f3 exf3 13 exf3 ♗f6 14 ♕c2

14 ♗b2 is not a problem for Black: 14...♘c7 15 ♘f4 g6 16 ♕d2 a6 17 a4 b6 18 ♖fd1 ♖b8 19 ♘d3 ♘xd3 20 ♕xd3 ♗d4+ 21 ♔h1 ♕f6 22 ♖ab1 ♖e8 ∓ Wang-Stiazhkina, New Delhi FIDE wom 2000.

14...♘c7 15 ♘f2 ♗d7 16 f4 ♘f7 17 ♗b2 a6 18 a4 b6 19 ♖fe1 ♖e8 20 ♗f1 ♖xe1 21 ♖xe1 ♕f8 22 ♘cd1

½-½ Lautier-Svidler, Tilburg 1996.

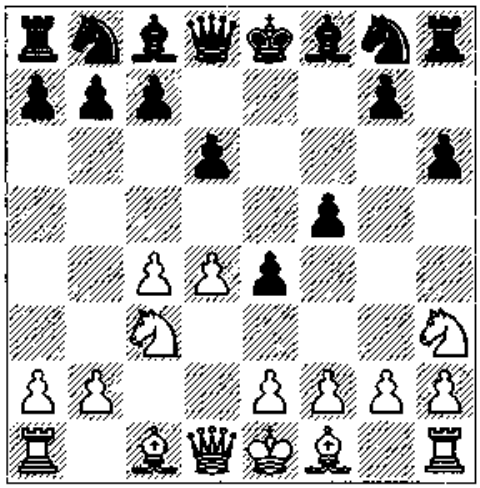
Conclusion: The plans associated with an early ...c5 are an interesting option for Black.

B)

5...h6

This introduces an independent plan, namely ...h6 and ...g5. This set-up is logical but risky, as Black advances his pawns before developing.

6 ♘h3 *(D)*



B

6...g5

It is most logical to grab some space immediately, but 6...♗e6!? also looks possible, with the idea of improving the bishop's position: 7 ♘f4 ♗f7 8 ♕b3 ♕c8 9 h4 (after 9 f3 g5 10 ♘h3 ♘f6 11 fxe4 fxe4 12 ♘f2 Black managed activate his bishop with 12...♗g6 = in J.Richardson-R.Pert, London 1997) 9...♗e7 10 ♘cd5 (10 h5!?, fixing the black kingside, also looks possible) 10...c6 11 ♘e3 g6 12 g4 (12 h5!?) 12...fxg4 13 ♘xg4 b5 with a sharp fight, Billio-Karakas, Caorle 1981.

7 ♘g1!?

White plans to weaken Black's advanced pawns. Alternatives:

a) 7 f3 ♘f6 (7...exf3!?) transposes to note 'a' to Black's 5th move in Line B of Chapter 4.

b) 7 g3 is not dangerous, because after 7...♘f6 8 f3 exf3 9 exf3 ♕e7+ 10 ♕e2 ♕xe2+ 11 ♘xe2 Black has the normal counter in the centre: 11...c5! 12 b3 ♘c6 13 ♗b2 ♗g7 = Schmidt-McNab, Thessaloniki OL 1984.

c) 7 e3 is sharp idea to fight for the centre, but 7...♘f6 8 f3 (8 ♗e2 ♗e6 9 b4 ♗g7 10 ♕c2 0-0 11 d5 ♗f7 12 f3 exf3 13 gxf3 ♕d7 14 ♗d3 ♗g6 15 ♘f2 c6 ∓ Sani-Berkmortel, Caorle 1988; 8 b4 ♗g7 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 ♕b3 ♘c6 11 ♘g1 ♘e7 12 h4 g4 13 c5+ ♔h8 14 g3 a5 ∓ Schön-Hickl, Bundesliga 1987/8) 8...exf3 9 gxf3 ♗g7 10 ♘f2 ♘c6 11 ♗d3 ♕e7 12 ♘e2 ♗d7 13 f4 0-0-0 is

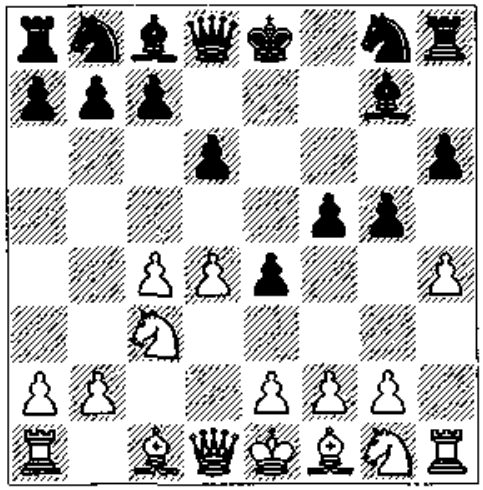
very good for Black, Pyhälä-Yrjölä, Helsinki 1991.

7...♗g7

After 7...♘f6 8 h4 ♖g8 9 hxg5 hxg5 White can force a weakening of Black's kingside pawn-formation: 10 ♘h3 g4 (10...f4 11 e3 ± is no good for Black, but maybe 10...♗h6!? is worth a try) 11 ♘f4 ± Illescas-Hodgson, Spanish Cht 1993. This is White's most dangerous general plan, and Black must be aware of it.

8 h4 *(D)*

B



8...g4

Black fixes the kingside, because he can fight for the outpost f4.

a) 8...♗e6 is a flexible alternative: 9 hxg5 hxg5 10 ♖xh8 ♗xh8 11 e3 g4 (the calm 11...♗g7!? might be possible) 12 ♕b3 b6 13 ♘ge2 ♘e7 14 ♘f4 ♗f7 15 ♗d2 ♘d7 16 ♕a4 c6 17 ♗e2 a6 18 ♕a3 ♕b8 19 ♘d1 b5 20 ♗b4 ± Hübner-Böhm, Telex 1977.

b) 8...♘c6!? has not proved successful so far, but it might be possible to find improvements in the subsequent complications:

b1) 9 hxg5 ♘xd4 (9...hxg5!?) 10 gxh6 ♘e6 11 g4 ♘xh6 12 ♗xh6 ♖xh6 (12...♗xh6!?) 13 ♖xh6 ♗xh6 14 gxf5 ± Kalinichev-Vorotnikov, Würzburg 1992.

b2) 9 e3 ♘f6 10 hxg5 hxg5 11 ♖xh8+ ♗xh8 12 ♘h3 ♘g4 13 ♗e2 ♘h6 14 ♗d2 ♗d7 15 ♕b3 b6 16 0-0-0 ± Farago-Ermenkov, Albena 1983.

9 e3 ♘f6

The alternatives are slightly problematic for Black:

a) 9...♘d7 10 ♘ge2 h5 11 ♘f4 ♘f8 12 ♕a4+ ♕d7 13 ♕b3 ♘e7 and Black has lost quite a lot of moves with his knights, so White gets an edge with 14 c5! dxc5 15 dxc5 ♘fg6 (15...c6 16 ♗c4 ♘eg6 17 ♘b5! ♘xf4 18 ♘d6+ ♔d8 19 exf4 ± Portisch-Seirawan, Mar del Plata 1982) 16 ♘xg6 ♘xg6 17 ♗d2 ± according to Portisch.

b) 9...♗e6 is another option, with better chances for White after 10 ♕b3 ♕c8 11 ♘ge2 ♘d7 12 ♘f4 ♗f7 13 ♗d2 a6 14 a4 ♘gf6 15 ♕c2 0-0 16 a5 ♕e8 17 ♘ce2 ♘h5 18 ♘xh5 ♗xh5 19 ♘f4 ± Eingorn-Deev, Berlin 1992.

10 ♘ge2 ♘h5! 11 ♘d5 ♗e6!?

11...c5 is not as good because of 12 ♗d2 ♘c6 13 ♗c3 ♗e6 14 dxc5 dxc5 15 ♕b3 0-0 16 ♗xg7 ♘xg7 17 0-0-0 ± Portisch-Quinteros, Nice OL 1974.

12 ♘ef4 ♘xf4 13 ♘xf4 ♗f7 14 ♕b3 c5!? 15 dxc5

15 ♕xb7 ♘d7, intending ...0-0 and ...♖b8, gives Black enough compensation.

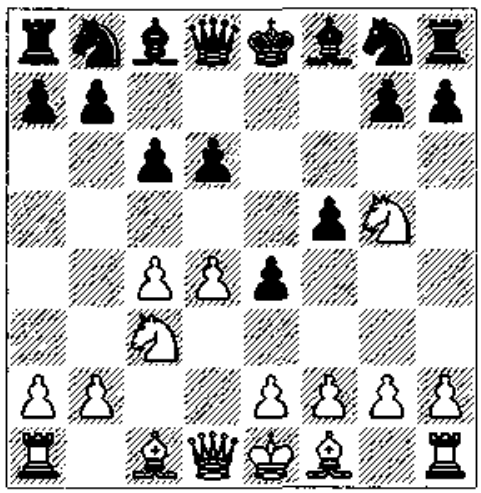
15...dxc5 16 ♗d2 ♕b6 17 ♗c3

½-½ I.Sokolov-Striković, Cadiz 1991. 17...♕xb3 18 axb3 ♗xc3+ 19 bxc3 leads to an equal position.

Conclusion: The plan ...h6 and ...g5 is quite sharp and dangerous, but there are not many games with it. It currently seems a viable option for Black.

C)

5...c6 *(D)*



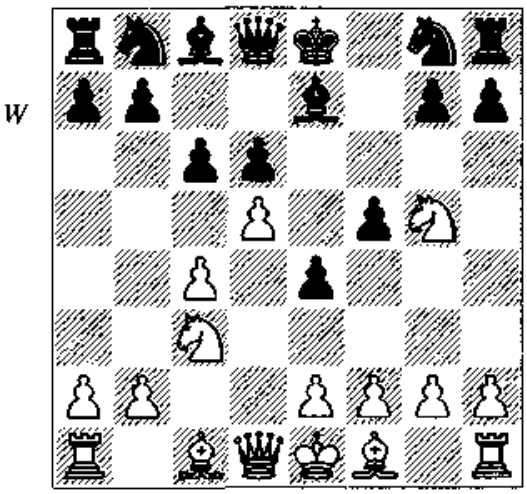
Black's most common approach, at least in the early 1990s, was to play this move and wait for White's actions. There is high probability of transpositions to other lines, so here we present only some independent move-orders and plans.

6 ♘h3

This is the most common move for White. Again, Black continues in a flexible way. Other moves:

a) 6 ♕b3 enjoyed a brief spell of popularity about ten years ago. There are some positional ideas connected with it, so it is worth a closer look. Firstly it stops ...d5, and secondly it brings extra forces to the queenside. 6...♗e7 (6...♘f6?! 7 ♘h3, intending ♗g5, gives White some advantage) 7 ♘h3 (after 7 h4 Black can equalize with 7...♕b6 8 ♕xb6 axb6 9 b3 ♘f6 10 ♘h3 ♘bd7 11 ♘f4 ♘f8 12 ♗b2 ♘g6 13 g3 ♘xf4 14 gxf4 d5 15 e3 ♗e6 16 ♗e2 h5 17 ♘a4 ♗d8 18 c5 b5 = Pugach-Rai.Garcia, Argentine Ch (Buenos Aires) 1965) 7...♘a6 (the alternative 7...♘f6?! is still slightly premature, as White plays 8 ♗g5 ♘a6 9 e3 ♘c7 10 ♘f4 with chances of getting some pressure) 8 e3 ♘f6 9 ♗e2 ♘c7 10 ♗d2, Timman-Gulko, Reykjavik 1991, and now 10...d5! = is most logical, as Black's knight is already supporting this central move. It has, however, never been played.

b) 6 d5 expands in the centre, providing strong posts for both player's pieces: White gets the a1-h8 diagonal, especially the d4-square and sometimes also e6, while Black gets e5 and c5 for his knights. 6...♗e7 *(D)* and now:



b1) 7 h4 ♘f6 8 ♗f4 h6 9 ♘h3 0-0 10 c5!? is an original idea, but Black is quite OK after 10...cxd5 11 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 12 ♕xd5+ ♔h8 13 cxd6 ♗f6 14 ♕d2 (14 ♗g5!?) 14...♕b6 15 ♖b1

♗e6 16 ♗e3 ♕a6 17 ♘f4 ♕xa2 18 ♖c1 ♖d8 with good compensation, Meyer-McNab, Nørresundby 1992.

b2) 7 ♘h3 ♘a6 (7...♘f6!? is also possible: 8 e3 ♘bd7 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 b3 ♘e5 11 ♗b2 ♘fg4 12 ♕d2 ♗h4!? 13 g3 ♗e7 14 ♘g1 g5 15 ♘d1 ♘g6 16 h3 ♘4e5 17 ♘c3 c5 18 0-0-0 a6 19 f4 exf3 20 ♘xf3 ♘xf3 21 ♗xf3 b5 and it is Black who is attacking, Cummings-Watson, British Ch (Norwich) 1994) and now:

b21) 8 g3 is a thematic developing move: 8...♗f6!? 9 ♗g2 ♘e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♗e3 ♘c7 (11...♘g6!? with the point 12 ♗d4 ♘e5) 12 ♗d4 ♗xd4 13 ♕xd4 c5 14 ♕d2 ♘g6 15 f3! exf3 16 exf3 ♗d7 17 f4 ± Nikolić-Speelman, New York 1994.

b22) 8 e3 ♗f6! (Black's best idea is to develop his bishop on the long diagonal whenever possible) 9 ♗d2 (9 ♗e2!?) 9...♘h6 (9...♘e7!?) 10 ♘f4 0-0 11 ♗e2 ♗d7 12 0-0 (12 g3 ♕e7 13 h4 is playable for White) 12...♕e7 13 ♖c1 ♗e5 gives Black a comfortable position; e.g., 14 f3 g5 15 ♘h3 exf3 16 gxf3 f4 ∓ Johansen-Gulko, Copenhagen 1996.

6...♘a6 *(D)*

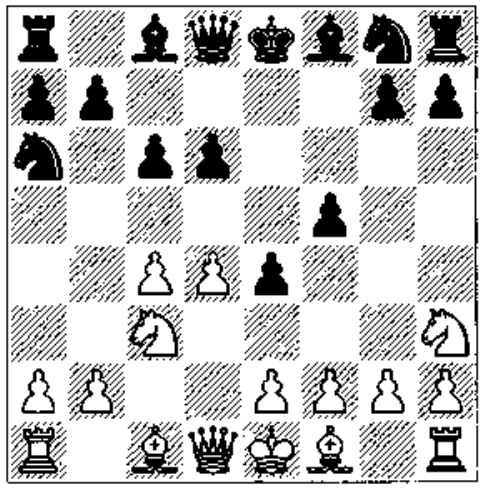
6...♘f6 7 ♗g5 enables White to improve his bishop's position.

7 g3

Black has committed himself to ...♘a6 plans, so White tries to choose a line with g3. Other moves:

a) 7 f3 ♘f6 and then:

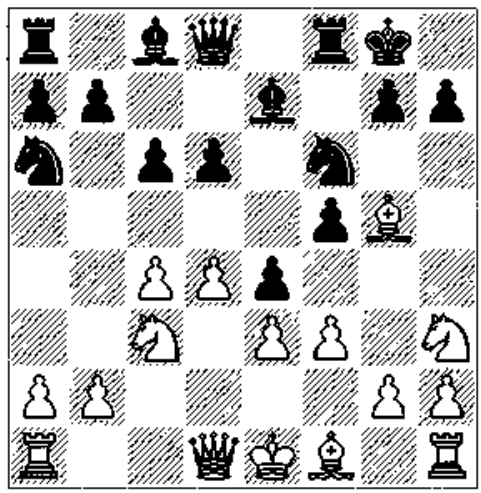
a1) 8 fxe4 fxe4 9 ♗g5 ♗e7 10 e3 0-0 11 ♘f2 allows the original idea 11...♘d5!? (11...d5 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♕b3 ±) 12 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 13 ♘fxe4,



when Black gets quite a lot of activity with 13...♘f5 14 ♕d2 d5 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 ♗xa6! bxa6 17 ♘g3 ♘xe3! 18 ♕xe3 ♖e8 19 ♘ge4 ♗f5 20 0-0 ♗xe4 = Neverov-Foigel, Kherson 1989.

a2) 8 ♘f2 d5 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 ♗g5 ♗e7 11 e3 ♘c7 12 ♗e2 ♗e6 13 0-0 0-0 is equal, though White developed serious pressure after 14 ♖c1 ♘fe8?! (14...exf3) 15 ♗f4 ♘d6?! (15...♖c8!?) 16 ♗e5! ♕d7 17 ♘h3 ♖ac8 18 ♘f4 ♗f7 19 ♕e1 ♘de8 20 ♕g3 ± in the game Sitanggang-Komliakov, Manila OL 1992.

a3) 8 ♗g5 ♗e7 9 e3 0-0 *(D)*.



Here White has many options, but none of them seems really dangerous:

a31) 10 ♗xf6?! ♗xf6 11 fxe4 fxe4 12 ♘xe4 is bad due to 12...♗xh3 13 gxh3 ♗h4+, which favours Black.

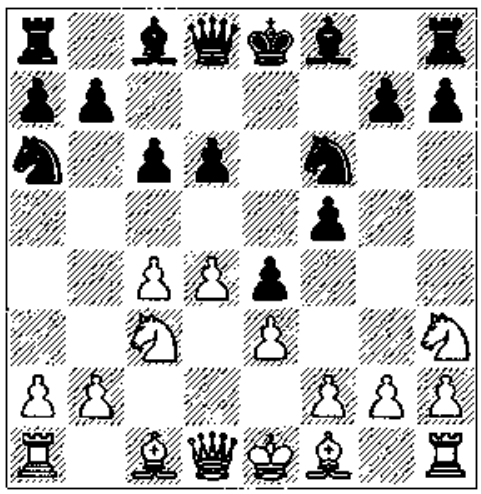
a32) 10 ♗e2 exf3 11 gxf3 (not 11 ♗xf3? ♘g4 12 ♗f4 g5 ∓) 11...♘h5 12 f4 (12 ♖g1? f4 ∓) 12...♗xg5 13 ♘xg5 ♘f6 ∓ leaves White's pawns seriously committed.

a33) 10 ♕b3 exf3 11 gxf3 allows Black to attack the centre quickly by 11...♘g4! 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 fxg4 fxg4 14 ♘g1 ♕xe3+ 15 ♘ge2 ♗e6, with an attack.

a34) 10 ♘f2 is a passive alternative: 10...exf3 11 ♕xf3 h6 12 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13 0-0-0 ♕a5 14 ♗d3 ♗e6 15 a3 ♘c7 16 g4 ♗g5 17 gxf5 ♗xf5 18 ♕g3 ♗xd3 19 ♘xd3 ♖ae8 ∓ Uhlmann-S.Mohr, Bundesliga 1995/6.

a35) 10 ♕d2 ♘c7 11 0-0-0 d5 with equality, Gulko-Speelman, Thessaloniki OL 1988.

b) 7 e3 ♘f6 *(D)* and here:



b1) 8 ♗e2 g6 (8...♗e7 9 0-0 0-0 transposes to Line B1 of Chapter 3) 9 0-0 ♗g7 10 ♗d2 (10 ♖b1 ♘c7 11 b4 0-0 12 a4 h6 13 f3 ½-½ Sutter-Hort, Switzerland 1996) 10...0-0 11 ♕b3 ♕e7 12 ♖ac1 ♔h8 13 a3 ♘c7 14 ♖fe1 ♘e6 15 d5 ♘c5 16 ♕c2 ♘cd7 17 dxc6 bxc6 18 ♖ed1 ♘e5 19 ♗e1 ♗e6 ∓ Kummer-Brestian, Moesern 1997.

b2) 8 ♘f4 and now:

b21) 8...♗e7 9 ♗e2 0-0 transposes to Line B2 of Chapter 3.

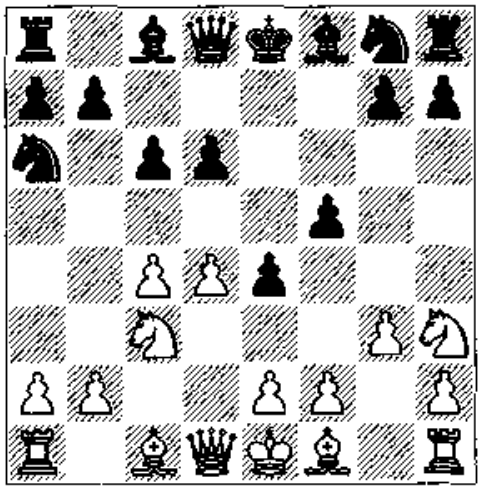
b22) 8...g6!? 9 a3 (9 g3 ♗g7 10 h4 0-0 11 ♗e2 ♘c7 12 d5 c5 13 ♕c2 ♗d7 14 a4 ♕e7 15 b3 ♘a6 16 ♗b2 ♘b4 = Gaertner-Maiwald, Budapest 1994) 9...♘c7 10 d5 ½-½ Hynes-McNab, Blackpool Z 1990.

b23) The active 8...g5!? is best. After 9 ♘h5 ♗e6 10 h4 Black seems to be able to play the committal 10...g4 11 ♘f4 ♗f7 12 d5 ♗g7 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 ♕c2 as he gets counterplay with 14...♘c5 15 b3 a5 16 ♗a3 ♘fd7 17 ♖d1 ♗e5 18 ♗e2 ♕f6 19 ♖c1 0-0 20 g3 ♖fb8 ∓ Ruban-Popchev, Sochi 1989.

c) 7 d5 is best met by 7...♘f6 8 e3 (8 f3 exf3 9 exf3 ♗e7 10 ♗d3 ♕b6 11 ♘f2 cxd5 12 cxd5 0-0 13 0-0 ♗d7 14 ♕e2 ♖ae8 is at least equal for Black, Uhlmann-Van der Wiel, Austrian Cht 1995) 8...g6 9 b3 (9 ♘f4 ♗g7 10 h4 ♘g4!? 11 ♗d2 0-0 12 ♗e2 ♕e7 13 ♖b1 ♘c5 14 b4 ♘d3+ 15 ♗xd3 exd3 16 ♔f1 a5 17 b5 ♘e5 18 ♕b3 ♗d7 is a messy position, but Black is probably already better, Popov-Miles, Rome 1990) 9...♗g7 10 ♗b2 0-0 11 ♕d2 ♘g4 12 ♗e2 ♘c5 and the classic battle Knaak-Speelman, Thessaloniki OL 1998 continued 13 ♖d1 ♕h4 14 ♘a4 f4 15 ♗xg7 fxe3 16 ♕c3 ♖xf2 17 ♗h8 ♖xg2+ 18 ♔f1 ♘e5 0-1.

We now return to the position after 7 g3 *(D)*:

B



7...g6!?

The plan of fianchettoing the dark-squared bishop is a fully playable option in this move-order.

The alternative is 7...♗e7 8 ♗g2 ♘f6 9 0-0 ♘c7 (9...0-0 transposes to Line B1 of Chapter 2), and now:

a) 10 d5 0-0 11 f3 transposes to Line B1 of Chapter 2.

b) 10 ♘f4 g5 (10...0-0!?) 11 ♘h3 h6 12 f3 exf3 (12...d5!?) 13 exf3 ♗e6 14 d5! cxd5 15 cxd5 ♘fxd5 (the alternative 15...♘cxd5 16 ♖e1 ♘xc3 17 bxc3 ♗f7 18 ♕c2 is good for White) 16 f4 ♘xc3 17 bxc3 g4 18 ♘f2 ♗f6? (18...0-0!?) 19 ♗a3! d5 20 ♖b1 b6 21 ♖e1 ♔f7 22 ♖xe6 ♔xe6 (the alternative 22...♘xe6 23 ♗xd5 ♖e8 24 ♕b3 ♕d7 25 ♖e1 is not to be recommended for Black) 23 ♕d3 ♕d7 24 c4! and White controls the game, Dao-Bezold, Budapest 1994.

8 ♗g2

8 ♘f4!? ♘f6 9 h4 ♘c7 10 d5 is another option, but Black develops his pieces to good squares: 10...♗d7 11 ♗g2 c5! 12 f3 ♕e7 (12...exf3!?) 13 fxe4 fxe4 14 ♕c2 ♗f5 (now the position becomes quite complicated) 15 h5 g5 (15...♖g8!?) 16 ♘e6! ♗xe6 17 dxe6 ♘xe6 18 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♕xe4 0-0-0 20 0-0 ♖e8 seems to be better for White, Lputian-Cu.Hansen, Wijk aan Zee 1993.

8...♗g7 9 0-0 ♘f6 10 ♗g5

10 f3 0-0 11 fxe4 fxe4 12 ♗g5 ♕b6! shows one plan associated with ...♗g7: the d4-pawn might be as weak as the e4-pawn. After 13 ♕d2 ♗e6 14 b3 ♘g4 15 ♖ad1 ♖xf1+ 16 ♗xf1 h6 17 ♗e3 ♖e8 18 ♗g2 ♘xe3 19 ♕xe3 ♘b4 Black has enough activity: 20 ♘xe4 ♘c2 21 ♕d3 ♕xd4+ 22 ♕xd4 ♗xd4+ 23 ♖xd4 ♘xd4 24 ♘f6+ ♔f7 25 ♘xe8 ♔xe8 26 ♘f4 ♔f7 27 ♔f2 ½-½ Schöpper-Angermüller, German corr. Ch 1993.

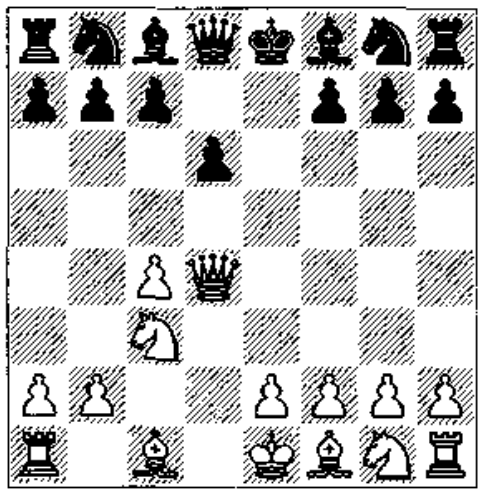
10...h6 11 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 12 e3 0-0

½-½ Yusupov-Cu.Hansen, Hamburg 1993.

Conclusion: 5...c6 is a sound alternative to the standard move-order. It is worth noting that there are many transpositions between these various options for Black.

7 3 ♘c3: Introduction

In Chapters 8 and 9 we study the position after 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘c3, when it is best for Black to break up the white centre immediately with 3...exd4 4 ♕xd4 *(D)*.

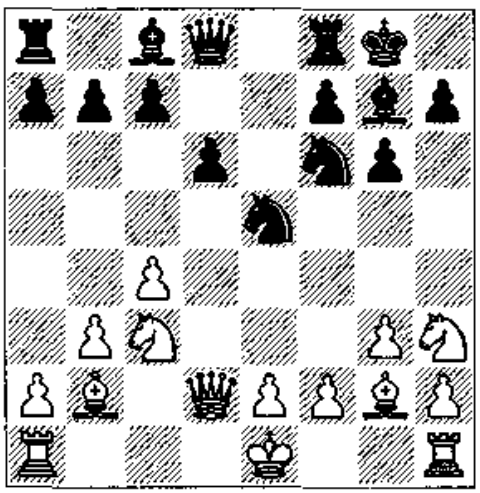


Now Black has a major decision: he can either win a tempo for development with 4...♘c6 or he can develop his kingside first, starting with 4...♘f6, trying to use the central position of the white queen to his advantage later.

The variations presented in this chapter can also be reached via an English Opening move-order: 1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 d6 3 d4. Because of this, the *ECO* code for these variations is A21.

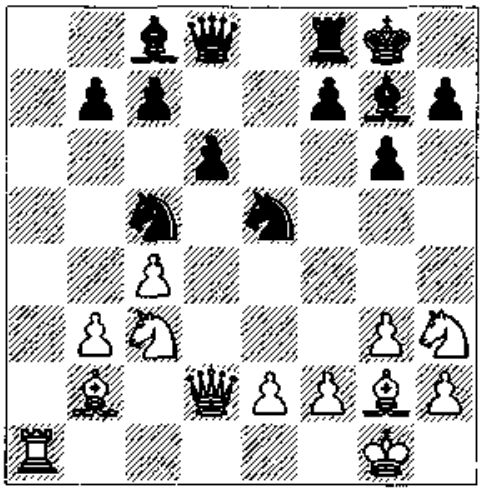
Positional Plans

Looking at the following diagram, the general plan for White is based on free development together with strong diagonals for his bishops. White has fianchettoed both bishops and he is going to continue with ♘f4 and 0-0. The bishops together with the d5-outpost for his knights usually give White his normal small opening advantage.

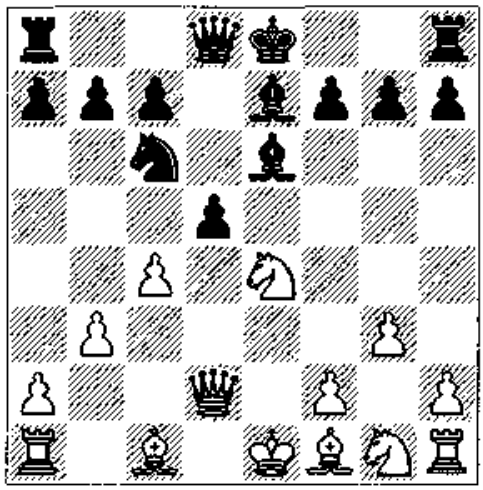


Czerwonski – Lukin
Miedzybrodzie 1991

The general plan for Black is ...g6, ...♗g7 and ...0-0. After securing his king, Black usually has both tactical and positional plans. The good thing is that the general positional plans usually give Black a playable position, and readers who wish to play only on general grounds will be completely OK here. In this example, the positional approach contains plans like ...a5-a4xb3 or sometimes even ...a5-a4-a3, together with ...♘e5 and ...♘fd7-c5.



Czerwonski – Lukin
Miedzybrodzie 1991

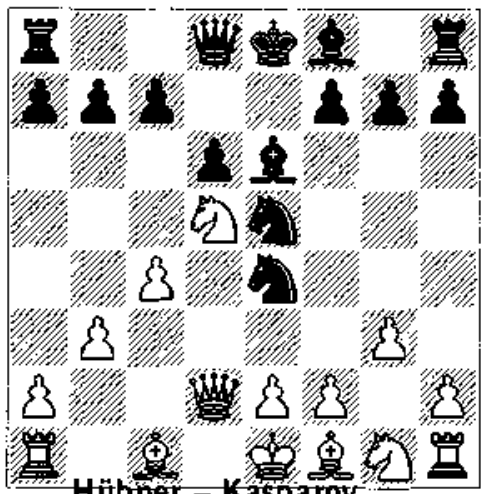


Franco – Romero
Leon 1990

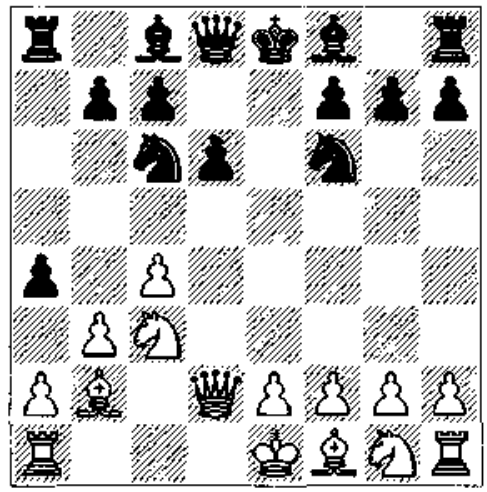
Here Black has implemented the standard plans, and can start activating the rest of pieces with moves like ...c6 and ...♕b6. The b3-pawn can also easily become a clear target for Black.

Tactical Plans

Depending on what White plays, there might be some exceptional tactical plans for Black. In the following positions we see some of these ideas.



Hübner – Kasparov
Hamburg (1) 1985



Lautier – Kramnik
Cannes (3) 1993

These plans are usually based on the fact that Black is a few tempi ahead in development because of the additional moves by White's queen. In some lines White may also weaken his position by playing b3, which leaves the long diagonal open until White has time for ♗b2; yet another possibility is that an early ♘d5 by White might weaken his central squares like e4.

8 3 ♘c3 exd4 4 ♕xd4 ♘c6

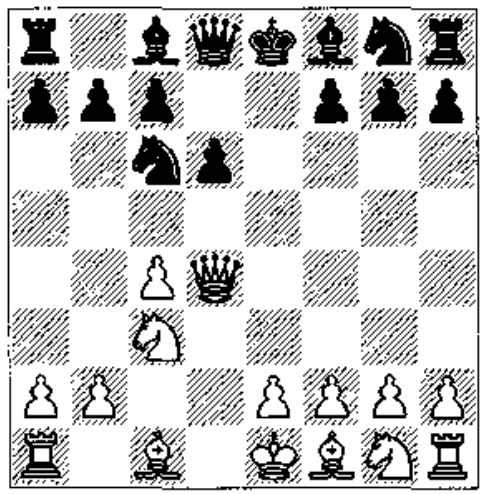
1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘c3

This position can also be reached via 1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 d6 3 d4. White is well centralized, but loses some time with his queen.

3...exd4 4 ♕xd4

Our main repertoire is connected with:

4...♘c6 *(D)*



This immediate gain of time for development is the most logical move, and it also serves to narrow White's options.

Now:

A: 5 ♕d1	51
B: 5 ♕d2	53

5 ♕e3+ is best answered by 5...♗e7, when Black doesn't have to worry about 6 ♘d5 ♗e6 7 ♘xe7 ♕xe7, since Black's advantage in development soon gives him good chances: 8 ♕c3 (8 b3 ♘f6 9 ♗b2 0-0-0 10 ♘f3 d5 ∓) 8...♕f6 9 ♕xf6? ♘xf6 10 e3 ♘b4 11 ♔d1 ♘e4 and Black wins, Cornière-Prochazka, Massy 1993.

A)

5 ♕d1

The main idea of this move is to develop the bishop actively with ♗g5.

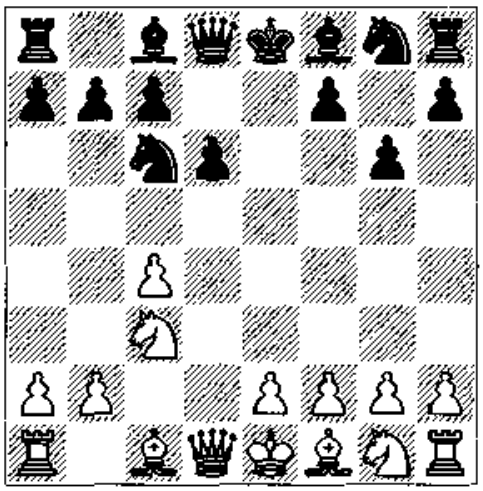
5...g6 *(D)*

Or:

a) 5...f5?! (this seriously weakens Black's pawn-structure) 6 g3 ♘f6 7 ♗g2 ♘e5 (Schmidt-Helbig, Berlin 1994) 8 b3 intending ♘h3-f4, ♗b2 and ♕d2 ±.

b) After 5...♘f6 the ♗g5 plan is not so effective: 6 ♗g5 (6 g3 is of course possible, as is 6 ♘f3) 6...♗e6!? (6...♗e7 7 e3 0-0 8 ♘f3 ♗e6 9 ♕c2 ♕d7 10 a3 ♖fe8 11 ♖d1 h6 12 ♗h4 ♖ad8 13 b4 ♘g4 14 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 15 ♗e2 ♘ge5 16 ♘d5 ♗xd5 17 ♖xd5 ♘xf3+ 18 ♗xf3 ♘e5 19 ♗e2 c6 20 ♖d2 a5 21 0-0 axb4 22 axb4 ♖a8 23 ♕b3 ♖ed8 24 ♖fd1 ♕f6 25 h3 ♘g6 26 ♖d4 ± Roos-Werner, Leipzig 1995) 7 e3 ♘e5 8 ♘d5 (8 ♘f3!? is an improvement) 8...c6 9 ♘c3 ♗xc4 10 ♗xc4 ♘xc4 11 ♕c2 d5 is much better for Black, Pichel Jallas-Alcaraz, Alicante 1989.

c) 5...♗e6!? is possible, and gave Black active play in the following example: 6 e3 ♘f6 7 ♘f3 d5 8 ♘g5 ♗b4 9 ♘xe6 fxe6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♗e2 d4 12 exd4 ♕xd4 13 0-0 0-0-0 14 ♗e3 ♕xd1 15 ♖fxd1 a6 16 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 17 ♖d1 ♖e8 18 g3 ♘e5 19 ♘d5 ♘xd5 20 ♖xd5 c6 21 ♖d1 ♔c7 22 ♔g2 b5 with counterplay, Babula-Freisler, Karvina 1989.



6 ♘f3

Or:

a) 6 g3 ♗g7 7 ♗g2 ♘ge7 8 e3 0-0 9 ♘ge2 ♗e6 10 ♘d5 ♘e5 11 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 12 ♗xb7? is refuted by a basic trick: 12...c6! 13 ♗xa8 ♘f3+ 0-1 Dimitriadi-Zakhariev, Khania 1995.

b) 6 b3 ♗g7 7 ♗b2 ♘f6 8 g3 0-0 9 ♗g2 ♗d7 10 ♕d2 is illogical; why did the queen go to d1 at all? A standard plan gives Black an active position: 10...a6 11 ♘h3 ♖b8! 12 0-0 b5 13 cxb5 axb5 14 ♘f4 ♘e5 15 ♖fc1 ♖e8 16 ♘cd5 ♘xd5 17 ♘xd5 c6 = Heissenbüttel-Reicher, Bad Wildbad 1993.

c) 6 e4 ♗g7 7 ♗d3 ♘ge7 8 f4 0-0 9 ♘f3 allows Black to play the thematic possibility 9...♘d4! 10 ♘d2 c6 11 0-0 d5 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 e5 ♗f5 14 ♗xf5 ♘dxf5 15 ♘f3 d4 16 ♘e4 ♕d5 17 ♕d3 ♘c6 with counterplay, Lombardy-Quinteros, Haifa OL 1976.

6...♗g7 7 ♗g5 ♘f6!

It is best for Black to develop and count on active counterplay with ...h6, ...g5 and ...♗f5. Otherwise:

a) 7...♘ge7?! is incorrect because of 8 ♘d5 f5 (8...♗xb2? 9 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 10 ♗xf6 ±; 8...0-0? 9 ♘f6+ ♔h8 10 h4 h6 11 e4 ±) 9 e3 h6 10 ♗f6 ♗xf6 11 ♘xf6+ ♔f7 12 ♘d5 ♘e5 13 ♘d4 c6 14 ♘c3 a6 15 ♗e2 c5 (15...b5? 16 cxb5 axb5 17 f4 ♘c4 18 ♗xc4+ bxc4 19 ♘xc6! ±) 16 ♘f3 ♗e6 17 b3 ♕a5 18 ♕d2 ♖ad8 19 ♖d1 ♘xf3+ 20 ♗xf3 b5 21 cxb5 axb5 22 0-0 d5 (22...b4 23 ♘e2 d5 24 ♘f4 ± Ribli) 23 b4! ♕xb4 (23...cxb4 24 ♘e2 is good for White due to Black's weak pawns) 24 ♖b1 ♕a5 25 ♖xb5 ♕a7 26 ♘e2 ± I.Sokolov-Topalov, Burgas 1992.

b) 7...f6 8 ♗f4 (8 ♗h4 ♘ge7 9 e3 0-0 10 ♗e2 ♘f5 11 ♗g3 ♘xg3 12 hxg3 ♘e5, intending ...c6 and ...f5, is OK for Black according to Sokolov) 8...♘e5 9 e3 ♘e7 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 ♘d4 g5 12 ♗g3 f5 13 f4 gxf4 14 exf4 ♘g4 15 ♕d2 ♘c6 16 ♘xc6 bxc6 17 h3 ♘f6 18 0-0 ♖e8 19 ♖ae1 ♗e6 20 ♗f2 c5 21 b3 ± Shapiro-Krant, Washington 1990.

8 e3

8 g3 h6 9 ♗f4 0-0 10 ♗g2 is more peaceful: 10...♗f5 11 0-0 g5 (11...♖e8!?) 12 ♗d2 ♘e4 13 ♖c1 ♖e8 14 h4 ♘xc3 15 ♗xc3 ♗e4 16 hxg5 hxg5 17 ♕d2 f6 18 b4 ♘e5 19 ♗xe5 dxe5 20 ♕e3 ♗g6 21 ♘d2 e4! = Ioseliani-Espig, 2nd Bundesliga 1998/9.

8...h6 9 ♗h4 0-0 10 ♗e2

Black now starts an active plan that works well here:

10...♗f5 11 0-0 g5! 12 ♗g3 ♘h5 13 ♘d4 ♘xg3 14 hxg3 ♘xd4 15 exd4 c6 16 g4 ♗g6 17 ♕d2 f5 18 gxf5 ♗xf5 19 ♗d3 ♕b6 20 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 21 ♘e2 ♖af8

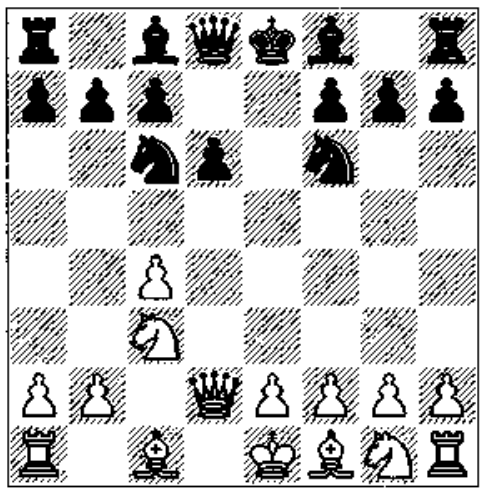
∓ J.Horvath-Dobrovolsky, Harkany 1995.

Conclusion: 5 ♕d1 is too passive to give Black any real problems.

B)

5 ♕d2 ♘f6 *(D)*

5...♗e6!? is also possible; for example, 6 e4 g6 7 b3 ♗h6 8 f4 f5 9 ♘f3 ♘f6 10 exf5 ♗xf5 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 ♗b2 ♕d7 13 0-0 ♖ae8 14 ♖ae1 ♗g7 15 ♗d3 ♗xd3 16 ♕xd3 ♘b4 17 ♕d2 ♕f5 and Black is fine, Christiansen-Blatny, Bremen 1996.



Now White has to choose which fianchetto to start first:

B1: 6 b3 53
B2: 6 g3 56

B1)

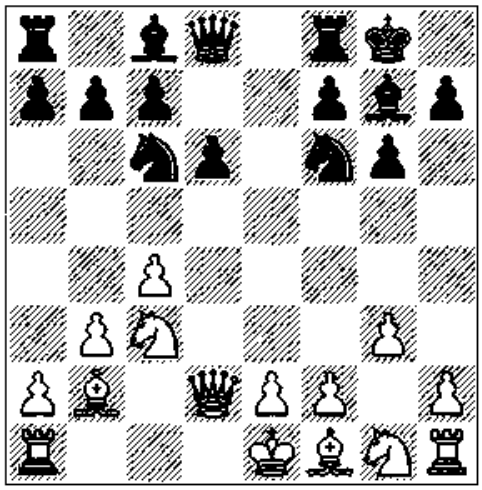
6 b3

White is aiming for the basic set-up with ♗b2, g3, ♗g2 followed by ♘h3-f4. Black's best option is to act immediately on the queenside.

6...a5!

Black's general plan usually contains the move ...a4, and here it can be played immediately because of tactical motifs.

The standard plan of development, starting with 6...g6, is of course possible. Play usually continues 7 ♗b2 ♗g7 8 g3 0-0 *(D)*:



a) 9 ♘h3 a5 10 ♘f4 is best met by the same general plan: ...♘e5 and a quick ...a4; for example, 10...♘e5 11 ♗g2 a4, and now:

a1) 12 0-0 a3 (12...♘fd7!?) 13 ♗c1 c6 14 ♖b1 ♕a5 15 ♕c2 ♖e8 16 ♗d2 ♕a6 17 ♖bd1 d5 (17...♗f5!?) 18 cxd5 cxd5 19 ♘fxd5 ♘xd5 20 ♘xd5 ♕xe2 21 ♖de1 ♕h5 22 ♕d1 ± Martin-Mestel, British Ch (Hove) 1997.

a2) 12 ♖d1 axb3 13 axb3 ♗d7 (the alternative 13...♘fd7!? also appears

pretty logical here) 14 0-0 ♖e8 15 ♖a1 ♖xa1 16 ♖xa1 ♗c6 17 ♘fd5 ♘ed7 18 ♘xf6+ (18 ♕c2 ♘c5 19 ♖d1 ♘xd5 20 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 21 ♗xd5 ♗xb2 22 ♕xb2 b6 = Ruf-Hickl, W.German Ch (Bad Neuenahr) 1989) 18...♘xf6 19 ♘d5 ♗xd5 20 cxd5 ♘d7 21 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 22 ♖c1 ♘c5 23 b4 ♘a6 24 e3 ♖e7 = Cvetkovski-Guzijan, Yugoslav Cht (Nikšić) 1997.

b) 9 ♗g2 ♘e5! (this move, implementing the plan ...a5-a4, has scored especially well for Black) and now:

b1) 10 ♘h3 a5 11 0-0 a4! 12 ♖ad1 axb3 13 axb3 ♘fd7 14 ♖a1 ♖xa1 15 ♖xa1 ♘c5 16 ♕d1 c6! 17 ♘f4 ♕b6 ∓ Czerwonski-Lukin, Miedzybrodzie 1991. Black has used the plan of attacking the b3 weakness very well.

b2) 10 f4 ♘ed7 11 ♘h3 ♘c5 12 ♘f2 a5 13 0-0 a4 14 b4 a3! 15 ♗c1 ♘cd7 16 ♖b1 ♘b6 17 ♕d3 ♗e6 18 ♘d5 c6 19 ♘xb6 ♕xb6 20 ♖b3 ♖a4 21 ♗xa3 ♖fa8 ∓ Telljohann-Smyslov, Münster 1993. Here the c4-pawn remains weak, and Black gets good prospects.

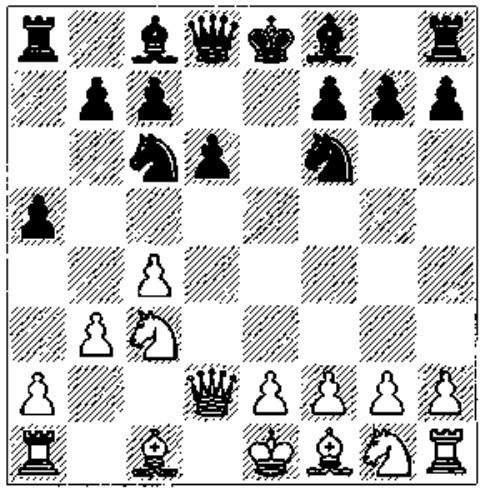
b3) 10 ♘f3 ♘ed7 11 0-0 a5 12 ♖ad1 ♘c5 13 ♘d4 ♖e8 14 ♗a1 h5 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 cxd5 h4 17 ♖fe1 ♗d7 18 ♘c2 ♗xa1 19 ♖xa1 b5 20 ♕h6 ♕f6 21 ♕f4 ♔g7 22 ♕xf6+ ♔xf6 with an equal position, Karpov-Anand, Roquebrune Amber rpd 1992.

We now return to 6...a5 *(D)*:

7 ♗b2

7 e4 leads to the same type of positions:

a) 7...a4 has been popular lately, but there are some problems for Black: 8 ♖b1 axb3 9 axb3 g6 (9...♗e7!? 10 ♗d3 0-0 11 ♘ge2 ♘b4 12 0-0 ♖e8 13 ♘f4 ♗f8 14 ♖d1 c6 15 f3 ♖a5 16 ♗f1 d5!? 17 ♔h1 ♕b6 18 ♘a4 ♖xa4 19 bxa4 dxe4 20 ♗a3 c5 21 ♖e1 exf3 22 ♖xe8 ♘xe8 23 gxf3 ♕h6 24 ♖d1 ♘c6 25 ♗b2 ♘d6 26 ♘d5 ± Anapolsky-Nevednichy, Bucharest 1994) and then:


W

a1) 10 g3 ♗g7 11 ♗g2 0-0 12 ♘ge2 and here:

a11) 12...♗e6!? 13 0-0 ♘d7 14 ♘d5 ♘c5 15 b4 ♘a4 16 ♕c2 ♘e5 17 ♘ef4 ♗d7 18 ♖e1 c6 19 ♘e3 b5 20 cxb5 cxb5 21 ♘fd5 ♖c8 22 ♕e2 ♗c6 23 ♖b3 ♘b6 24 ♖d1 ♘xd5 25 exd5 ♗d7 26 ♗b2 ♖e8 = Bowyer-J.Wells, English corr. Ch 1986.

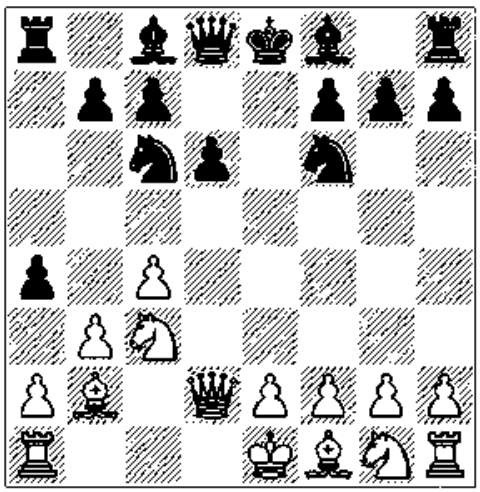
a12) 12...♘e5 13 f4 (13 0-0 ♗h3 14 f3 ♗xg2 15 ♔xg2 ♘fd7 16 ♗b2 ♘c5 17 ♘c1 c6 18 f4 ♘g4 19 b4 ♘a4 20 ♘xa4 ♖xa4 21 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 22 ♘e2 ♕b6 23 ♖f3 ♖fa8 ∓ Tabatadze-Vorotnikov, Belgorod 1989) 13...♘ed7 14 0-0 ♖e8 15 b4 ♕e7 16 ♕d3 ♘b6 = Korchnoi-Polugaevsky, Evian Ct (11) 1977.

a2) 10 ♗d3 ♗g7 11 ♘ge2 ♘b4 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♘f4 ♖e8 14 ♖d1 (14 ♗b2!?) 14...♘xd3 15 ♕xd3 ♘xe4! 16

♘xe4 ♖xe4 17 ♕xe4 ♗f5 18 ♕xb7 ♗xb1 19 ♘d5 ♖b8! (19...♗c2 20 ♖e1 ♖b8 21 ♕c6 ♗xb3 22 h3 ±) 20 ♕a7 (20 ♕xc7 ♕xc7 21 ♘xc7 ♗c2 22 ♖e1 ♗xb3 =) 20...♖xb3 21 ♖e1 h6 (Karpov-Epishin, Dos Hermanas 1993) 22 ♘xc7 ♕d7 23 ♕a8+ ♔h7 24 ♘e8 ♗h8 25 ♗f4 ± (Karpov).

b) 7...♗e6 is probably Black's safest choice, with the standard plan of ...a4xb3 and ...♘d7-c5 working well almost against all of White's options: 8 ♗b2 (8 ♗d3 a4 9 ♖b1 axb3 10 axb3 g6 11 ♘ge2 ♗g7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♗b2 ♖e8 14 ♘d5 ♗xd5 15 cxd5 ♘e5 16 ♗c2 c6 = Polugaevsky-Tseshkovsky, USSR Ch (Leningrad) 1974; 8 ♘ge2 a4 9 ♖b1 axb3 10 axb3 g6 11 g3 ♗g7 12 ♗g2 0-0 13 0-0 ♘d7 14 ♘d5 ♘c5 15 b4 ♘a4 16 ♕c2 ♘e5 17 ♘ef4 ♗d7 = Hübner-Balashov, Rio de Janeiro IZ 1979) 8...a4 9 ♖d1 axb3 10 axb3 ♘d7 11 ♘ge2 ♘c5 12 ♘c1 ♗e7 13 ♗e2 ♗f6 14 0-0 0-0 = Anapolsky-A.Sokolov, Jurmala 1991.

7...a4! *(D)*



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8 ♖d1

Otherwise:

a) 8 ♘xa4?! d5! 9 cxd5 (9 c5 ♘e4 10 ♕c1 ♖xa4 11 bxa4 ♗xc5 ∓) 9...♘e4 10 ♕d3 (10 ♕e3 loses to 10...♖xa4! 11 bxa4 ♗b4+ 12 ♔d1 ♕xd5+) 10...♖xa4 11 a3 ♘c5 12 ♕d1 (12 ♕c3 ♕xd5!) 12...♖e4 13 b4 ♘xb4 14 axb4 ♖xb4!? looks good for Black.

b) 8 e4?! a3! 9 ♗c1 g6 10 ♗d3 ♗g7 11 ♘ge2 0-0 12 0-0 ♘d7 13 ♕d1 ♘c5 14 ♗c2 ♘b4 15 ♗e3 f5 16 exf5 ♘xc2 17 ♕xc2 ♗xf5 18 ♕d2 ♕e7 ∓ Manor-Oratovsky, Netanya 1993.

c) 8 ♘d5 is possible. Black then has the interesting option 8...♘xd5!? 9 cxd5 ♘e5 with an unclear position; for example, 10 ♘f3 (10 e4!?) 10...♗e7 11 ♘xe5 dxe5 12 ♗xe5 ♗f6 13 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 14 ♕e3+ ♔d8 15 ♖c1 axb3 16 ♕xb3 ♕a6 17 ♕c3 ♕a5 18 a3 ♖e8 19 e3 ♖e4 20 ♕xa5 ♖xa5 21 ♗e2 ♖ea4 22 0-0 ♖xd5 23 ♗c4 ♖c5 24 ♗xf7 ♖xc1 25 ♖xc1 ♖xa3 ∓ Popov-Tseshkovsky, Becici 1994.

8...axb3 9 axb3 g6

9...♗e7 seems a playable option: 10 e4 0-0 11 ♗d3 ♘d4 12 ♗c2 ♘xc2+ 13 ♕xc2 ♗d7 14 ♘ge2 c6 15 ♘d4 ♖e8 16 0-0 ½-½ Grabliauskas-Zagorskis, Vilnius 1994.

10 e4

After 10 ♘d5 ♗g7 11 ♕g5 ♘xd5 12 ♕xd8+ ♘xd8 13 ♗xg7 ♖g8 Black has counterplay.

10...♗g7 11 ♗d3

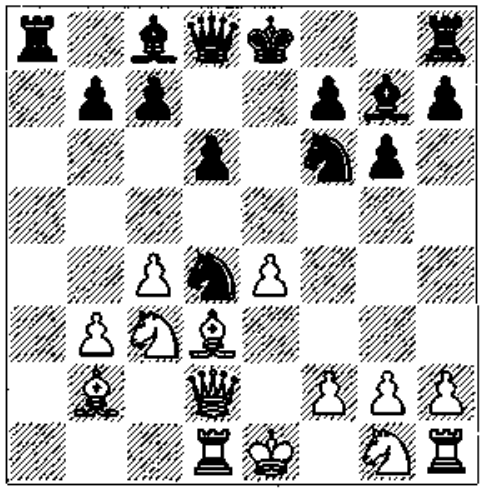
White's pieces are not coordinating well, so Black gets counterchances.

11...♘d4! *(D)*

12 ♗c2

12 b4?! 0-0 13 ♘ge2 ♘c6 (alternatively, 13...♘g4!? 14 0-0 ♘c6) 14

W



♘d5 ♘e5! 15 0-0 ♘xe4 (15...♘xd5! 16 ♗xe5 {forced} 16...♗xe5 17 cxd5 ♗d7 18 f4 ♗g7 ∓) 16 ♗xe4 ♘xc4 17 ♗xg7 ♘xd2 18 ♗xf8! (18 ♗f6 ♘xe4 ∓) 18...♘xe4 19 ♗e7 ♕d7 20 ♘g3! ♘xg3 21 ♘f6+ (21 fxg3? ♕b5 is much better for Black) 21...♔g7 22 ♘xd7 (Norri-Yrjölä, Finnish Ch (Helsinki) 1996) 22...♘e2+! 23 ♔h1 ♗xd7 24 ♖a1 ♖e8 25 ♗g5 ♗b5 26 ♖fe1 d5 27 ♗d2 d4 and the most probable outcome is a draw.

12...♘xc2+ 13 ♕xc2 0-0 14 ♘ge2 ♘h5

14...♖e8 15 0-0 ♘xe4? 16 ♘xe4 ♗xb2 17 ♘xd6 is much better for White, but 14...♘g4!? might be possible.

15 0-0 f5 16 c5 fxe4

Now:

a) 17 cxd6 cxd6 (17...e3?! is dubious because after 18 dxc7, 18...exf2+? loses to 19 ♖xf2 ♕xc7 20 ♘d5!) 18 ♘xe4 (18 ♕xe4 ♘f6 19 ♕d3 ♗e6 =) 18...d5 19 ♗xg7 ♘xg7 is approximately equal.

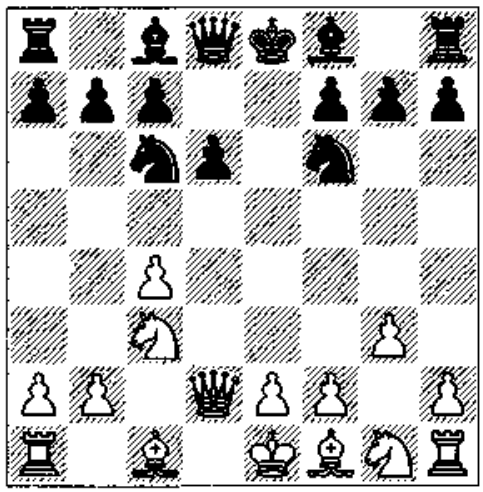
b) 17 ♘xe4 was played in the game Lautier-Kramnik, Cannes (3) 1993. Now 17...♗xb2 18 ♕xb2 ♕e7! 19 cxd6 ♕xe4 20 d7 ♕e7! 21 dxc8♕ ♖axc8 is equal.

Conclusion: The active plan on the queenside should give Black enough play in this line.

B2)

6 g3 *(D)*

B



White's general plan is usually to fianchetto both bishops and then to develop the g1-knight by, for example, ♘h3-f4.

6...♗e6!

Black constantly seeks tactical possibilities. It is best to start by attacking the c4-pawn at once.

6...a5!? is another option: 7 ♗g2 a4 8 ♘f3 (8 ♘d5 ♘e5 9 ♕c2 c6 10 ♘f4 g6 11 ♘gh3 ♗g7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♗d2 ♗f5 14 ♕c1 h6 15 f3 ♕b6+ 16 ♘f2 ♕d4 ∓ Khasanov-Vorotnikov, Alushta 1993) 8...g6 9 ♘d4 ♘e5 10 ♕c2 a3 11 b3 ♗g7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♘db5 ♗f5 14 e4 ♗g4 15 f3 c6 16 ♘xa3 ♕b6+ 17 ♔h1 ♗e6 18 ♗b2 ♕b4 19 ♘ab1 d5 is

total chaos with Black having the initiative, Herndl-Komliakov, Manila OL 1992.

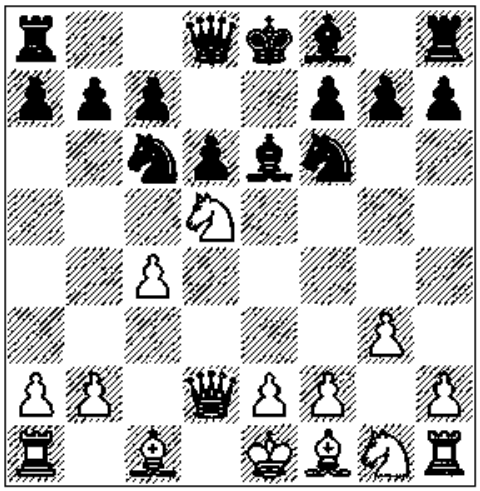
Now (after 6...♗e6):

B21: 7 ♘d5 57
B22: 7 e4 59

7 b3 d5! gives Black the initiative: 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗b2 ♘db4!? (9...♗b4 is also safe for Black) 10 ♘f3 ♕xd2+ 11 ♔xd2 ♖d8+ 12 ♔c1 ♗e7 13 a3 ♘a5 14 axb4 ♘xb3+ 15 ♔c2 ♘xa1+ 16 ♗xa1 ♗xb4 ∓ Schacher-Z.Lehmann, Siofok jr Ech 1996.

B21)

7 ♘d5 *(D)*



7...♘e5

Or:

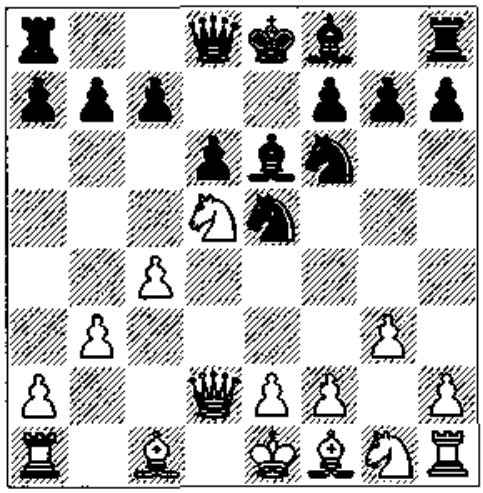
a) 7...♗e7 is possible, as there is no need for Black to be afraid of the exchange of his dark-squared bishop: 8 ♗g2 0-0 9 ♘f3 ♕d7 10 0-0 and now instead of 10...♗h3?, as played in Kraai-Bermudez, USA 1990, which is refuted by the calm 11 ♗xh3 ♕xh3 12 ♘xc7 ♘g4!? 13 ♘xa8 ♘ce5 14 ♖e1, Black could try 10...♘e4!? 11 ♕f4 f5 with some active play.

b) 7...g6 8 b3 ♗g7 9 ♗b2 0-0 leads to the same position-type as in Line B1. After 10 ♗g2 White has slightly the better game, though Black's position is quite stable:

b1) 10...♖e8 11 ♖d1!? (11 e3 ♘e5 12 ♘e2 c6 = Levitt-Speelman, Dublin Z 1993) 11...a5 12 ♘h3 a4 13 ♘hf4 ♘e5 (13...axb3!?) 14 ♗xe5 dxe5 15 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 16 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 17 ♗xb7 ♖b8 18 ♗d5 ♖eb6 19 c5 ± Cvetković-Johnsen, Korinthos 1998.

b2) 10...a5 11 ♘h3 ♖e8 12 ♘hf4 ♗xd5 13 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 14 cxd5 ♗xb2 15 ♕xb2 ♘b4 16 0-0 ♕e7 17 ♖fe1 ♘a6 18 ♖ac1 ♘c5 19 ♕d2 f5 20 ♖c3 ♕g7 21 ♖ec1 ♖e7 22 ♕c2 ♖f8 23 e3 ± Naumann-Weil, Giessen 1991.

8 b3 *(D)*



8...♘e4!

With this move, Black relies on tactical devices.

8...♗e7 is also playable. 9 ♗g2 c6 10 ♘xe7 (10 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 11 ♗b2 ♕b6 12 ♖b1 0-0 13 ♘f3 ♘xf3+ 14

♗xf3 ♗xb2 15 ♕xb2 ♗h3 16 e3 ♖fe8 17 ♔e2 d5 18 ♖hd1 dxc4 19 bxc4 ♕c5 20 ♕b4 ♕f5 ∓ Koutsin-Czerwonski, Frydek-Mistek 1994) 10...♕xe7 11 ♗a3 ♖d8 12 f4 ♘g6 13 0-0-0 c5 14 e4 ♗c8 15 ♘e2 ♘xe4 16 ♗xe4 ♕xe4 17 ♘c3 ♕f5 18 ♖he1+ ♗e6 19 ♘e4 0-0 20 ♘xd6 ♕h3 21 ♕f2 ♗g4 22 ♖d2 b6 23 f5 ♘h4! was unclear in Ligterink-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1985.

9 ♕e3

9 ♕d4 is an improvement, but Black is OK after 9...♘c5 (9...f5!? 10 ♗g2 g6, Kristiansen-Reinert, Denmark 1985, is also possible, but 11 ♘f4 is hard to meet) 10 f4 ♘c6 11 ♕e3 ♗e7 12 ♘xe7 ♕xe7 13 ♗b2 0-0-0 and now:

a) 14 ♗xg7? ♖he8 15 ♗b2 (15 ♗c3 d5! 16 ♖d1 dxc4 ∓; 15 ♕c3 ♘e4 16 ♕d3 d5 gives Black an attack) 15...♘b4 16 ♕d2 ♗f5 ∓.

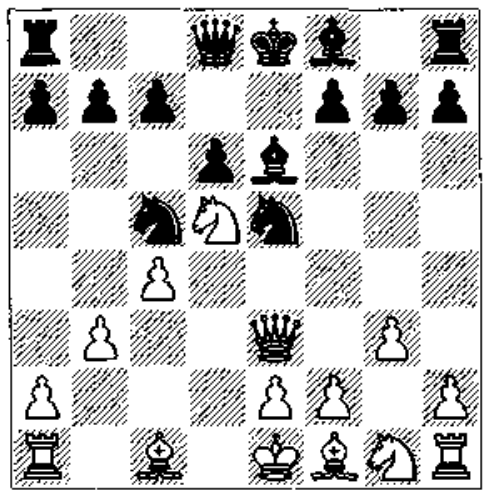
b) 14 ♘f3 ♖he8 15 ♘d4 ♘xd4 16 ♗xd4 ♕d7 17 ♕c3 ♗h3! (17...♕c6 18 ♖g1 ♗g4 19 ♕c2, Taimanov-Smyslov, USSR Ch (Tbilisi) 1966/7, 19...g6 ∓) 18 0-0-0 (18 ♗xg7? ♗xf1 19 ♖xf1 f6! wins for Black) 18...♗xf1 19 ♖hxf1 ♘e4 20 ♕a5 a6 21 ♕h5 f5 22 e3 (22 ♕xh7 ♖h8 23 ♕xg7 ♕xg7 24 ♗xg7 ♖xh2 ∓) 22...g6 ∓ Lonoff-Read, corr. 1989.

9...♘c5 *(D)*

9...c6 also favours Black. 10 ♕xe4 cxd5 11 cxd5 ♕a5+ 12 ♗d2 and now:

a) 12...♗xd5 13 ♕f4 (or 13 ♗xa5 ♗xe4 14 f3 ♗c6 15 ♗g2 ♗e7 with equality, Ftačnik-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1985) 13...♕b6 14 ♘f3 g5!? 15 ♕f5 ♗g7 16 ♖c1 0-0 17 ♗g2 (17 ♘xg5 ♖fe8 18 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 gives Black sufficient compensation) 17...♖fe8 18 0-0 h6 was unclear in Rajković-Jansa, Kragujevac 1974.

b) 12...♕xd5!? 13 ♗g2 ♕xe4 14 ♗xe4 d5 15 ♗g2 ♖c8 (15...f6 16 ♘h3 ♘g6 17 0-0 ♗a3 18 ♗c1 ♗c5 19 ♖d1 ♔e7 20 ♘f4 ♘xf4 21 gxf4 ½-½ Bewersdorff-Burkart, Bundesliga 1990/1; 15...♗a3 16 ♘f3 ♘xf3+ 17 ♗xf3 ♖c8 18 0-0 ♖c2 19 ♗e3 ♗b2 20 ♖ad1 d4 21 ♖d2 ♖xd2 22 ♗xd2 b6 23 ♗b4 ♔d7 24 ♖b1 ♗c3 25 ♗a3 ♖c8 with an equal position, Janjgava-Lymar, Polička 1993) 16 ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 17 ♗xc1 ♗b4+ 18 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 19 ♔xd2 ♘g4 20 ♘h3 ♔d7 21 ♗f3 ♖c8 22 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 23 ♘f4 ♔d6 24 f3 ♗f5 25 ♖c1 ♖xc1 26 ♔xc1 g5 27 ♘g2 d4 ∓ Jakobsen-Laursen, corr. 1992.



10 ♗b2

10 ♗g2 !? is probably the last chance for White to bail out from the complications. Black should then play 10...c6 11 ♘c3 a5 according to Kasparov.

10...c6 11 ♘f4

It is too late for 11 ♘c3 according to Kasparov: 11...♘g4 12 ♕d4 ♗e7 ∓.

11...♘g4!

11...♗e7!? 12 ♘xe6 ♘xe6 13 ♗h3 ♗f6 14 ♗xe6 fxe6 15 ♘h3?! (15 f4!? might be a better try) 15...0-0 16 0-0 ♕b6 17 ♕e4 d5 18 ♕c2 ♖ae8 19 ♖ad1 ♘g4 20 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 21 ♘g5 h6 22 ♘f3 ♘e4 23 ♕b2 ♖f6 24 ♔g2 ♖ef8 25 ♕d4 ♕xd4 26 ♖xd4 g5 ∓ Smejkal-Rogoff, Amsterdam 1980.

12 ♕d4

12 ♘xe6 ♘xe3 13 ♘xd8 ♘c2+ 14 ♔d1 ♘xa1 15 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 16 ♗xa1 ♗e7 ∓ Kasparov.

12...♘e4! 13 ♗h3

Or:

a) 13 ♕xe4 ♕a5+ 14 ♔d1 ♘xf2+ −+.

b) 13 ♘d3 d5 14 cxd5 ♗xd5 15 ♘f3 c5 16 ♕a4+ ♗c6 17 ♕c4 ♕a5+! (17...b5 is also good: 18 ♕c2 c4 19 0-0-0, A.Schneider-Z.Lehmann, Budapest 1995, 19...♕c8 ∓) 18 b4 cxb4 −+.

13...♕a5+ 14 ♔f1 ♘gxf2

Black is winning, Hübner-Kasparov, Hamburg (1) 1985. The game concluded 15 ♗xe6 fxe6 16 ♘xe6 ♔d7 17 ♘h3 ♘xh3 18 ♕xe4 ♖e8 19 ♘c5+ ♕xc5 20 ♕g4+ ♔c7 21 ♕xh3 ♗e7 22 ♗xg7 ♖hf8+ 23 ♗xf8 ♖xf8+ 24 ♔e1 ♕f2+ 25 ♔d1 ♕d4+ 26 ♔c2 ♕e4+ 27 ♔d2 ♗g5+ 28 ♔c3 ♕e5+ 0-1.

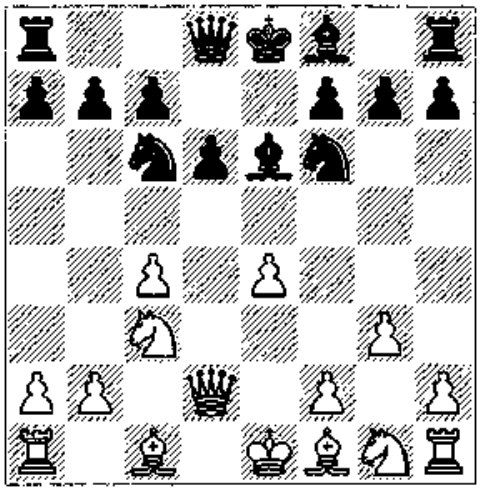
Conclusion: This classic game is a good illustration of Black's tactical methods of solving his opening problems.

B22)

7 e4 *(D)*

Black also has many different tactical plans in this variation, and the most spectacular of them is the main line.

B



7...♗e7

Or:

a) 7...g6 8 b3 ♗g7 9 ♗b2 0-0 10 ♗g2 a5 is also playable; for example, 11 ♘ge2 a4 12 ♖b1 axb3 13 axb3 ♘d7 14 ♘b5 ♗xb2 15 ♕xb2 ♘b4 16 ♕c3 ♘c6 17 0-0 ♘c5 18 ♘f4 ♘e5 19 ♘xe6 fxe6 20 b4 ♘a4 21 ♕b3 ♕e7 22 f4 is slightly better for White, Cebalo-Smejkal, Zagreb 1985.

b) 7...♕d7!? has been tried: 8 b3 ♘xe4 9 ♘xe4 d5 10 cxd5 ♗b4 11 ♘c3 ♗xd5 12 f3 0-0-0? (12...♕e7+! 13 ♗e2 0-0-0, with a winning attack, is the correct move-order) 13 ♗b2? (13 ♔f2!) 13...♕e7+ 14 ♗e2 ♗xf3 15 ♘xf3 ♖xd2 16 ♔xd2 ♖d8+ 0-1 Caruana Font-Eslon, Javea 1992.

c) 7...a5 is also possible, employing the same ideas as in the main line. 8 b3 and now:

c1) 8...a4!? 9 ♖b1 axb3 10 axb3 ♘xe4 11 ♘xe4 d5 12 cxd5 ♗b4 13 ♘c3 (13 dxe6 ♗xd2+ 14 ♗xd2 fxe6 ½-½ Gheorghiu-McNab, Dubai OL 1986) 13...♗xd5 14 f3 ♕e7+ (14...0-0 15 ♔f2 ♖a5 16 ♗c4 ♘d4 17 ♕xd4 ♗c5 18 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 19 ♘xd5 b5 20

♗a3 bxc4 21 ♗xc5 ♕xd5 22 ♗xf8 ♕d4+ 23 ♔g2 ½-½ Palatnik-Lputian, Irkutsk 1983) 15 ♗e2 ♕c5 16 ♗c4 ♖d8 17 ♕b2 h5 18 ♕e2+ ♔f8 ∓ Gasik-Adamski, Warsaw 1991.

c2) 8...♘xe4 9 ♘xe4 d5 and here:

c21) 10 ♘c3 d4 11 ♗b2 (11 ♘e4 ♗b4 −+) 11...dxc3 12 ♗xc3 ♕xd2+ 13 ♔xd2 ♗b4 14 ♘e2 0-0-0+ 15 ♔c2 ♗f5+ 16 ♔b2 ♗xc3+ 17 ♘xc3 ♖d2+ 18 ♔a3 ♖xf2 ∓ Ilić-Majerić, Zlatibor 1989.

c22) 10 cxd5 ♗xd5 and now:

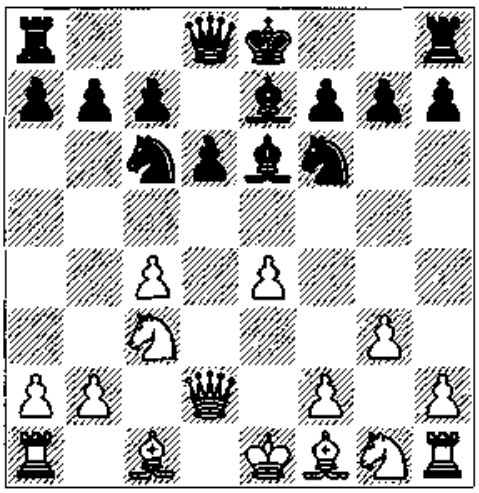
c221) 11 ♗g2? ♗b4 12 ♘c3 ♗xg2 −+.

c222) 11 ♕e3? ♗b4+ 12 ♘c3+ ♕e7 −+.

c223) 11 ♕e2? ♗b4+ 12 ♗d2 ♕e7 13 f3 (13 ♗g2 ♗xd2+ 14 ♔xd2 0-0-0 −+) 13...♘d4 14 ♕d3 ♘xf3+! 15 ♘xf3 ♗xe4 16 ♕e3 ♗xf3 −+ Polak-Jansa, Lazne Bohdanec 1997.

c224) 11 f3!? ♗b4 (11...♗xe4 12 ♕xd8+ ♖xd8 13 fxe4 ±) 12 ♘c3 ♕e7+ 13 ♗e2 0-0-0 with good compensation.

We now return to the position after 7...♗e7 *(D)*:

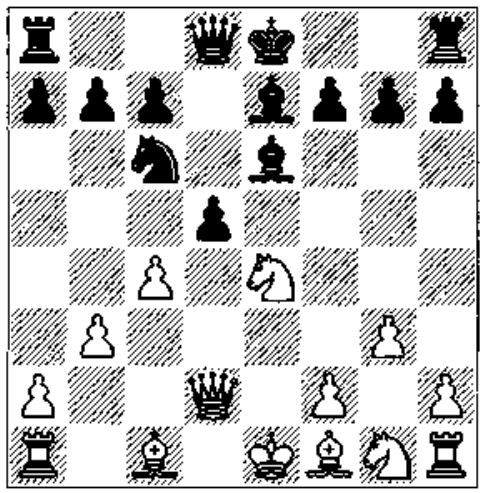


8 f3

Otherwise:

a) 8 ♕e2!? is a suggested improvement, to stop the tactics.

b) 8 b3 runs into the thematic 8...♘xe4! 9 ♘xe4 d5 *(D)*, when White has to try to survive:



b1) 10 cxd5? ♗xd5 11 f3 ♗b4 12 ♘c3 ♕f6 13 ♗b2 0-0-0 14 ♗e2 (14 0-0-0 ♗xf3 −+) 14...♗xf3 15 ♘xf3 ♖xd2 16 ♔xd2 ♖d8+ 17 ♔c2 ♕g6+ 18 ♔c1 ♗c5 19 ♘d1 ♕e4 20 ♖e1 0-1 Benko-Psakhis, Aruba 1992.

b2) 10 ♘c3? d4 11 ♘ge2 dxc3 12 ♘xc3 ♕xd2+ 13 ♗xd2 ♘d4 14 ♘b5 ♘f3+ 15 ♔e2 0-0-0 16 ♗f4 ♗g4 17 ♗g2 ♘d4+ 18 ♔f1 ♗e2+ 19 ♔g1 ♘f3+ 20 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 is winning for Black, Iskusnykh-Belikov, Moscow 1996.

b3) 10 ♗g2! is best, though Black is better after 10...♗b4 (10...dxe4?! 11 ♗xe4 =) 11 ♘c3 d4:

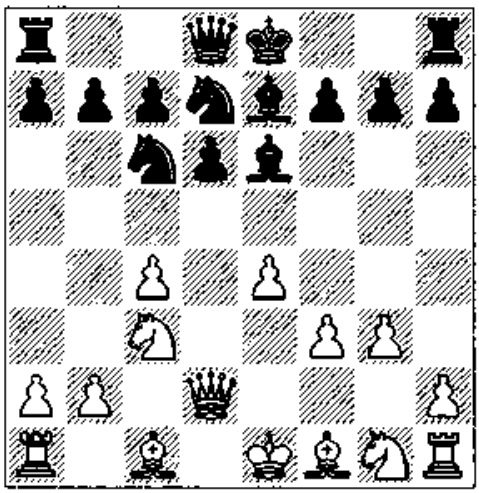
b31) 12 ♘ge2 dxc3 13 ♘xc3 ♕xd2+ 14 ♗xd2 ♘e5! 15 ♗xb7 (15 0-0?! 0-0-0 16 ♗e1?! ♘d3 −+) 15...♖d8 with more than enough compensation.

b32) 12 ♗b2 ♕f6 13 ♘ge2 0-0-0 14 ♕c1 dxc3! 15 ♗xc3 ♕e5! 16 ♗xc6 bxc6 17 ♗xb4 (17 ♕e3 ♕xe3 18 fxe3 ♗xc3+ 19 ♘xc3 ♖d3 20 ♘d1 ♖hd8 −+) 17...♗h3! ∓ Franco-Romero, Leon 1990.

8...♘d7!? *(D)*

8...0-0 is a safe option; for example, 9 b3 a5 10 ♘ge2 a4 11 ♖b1 axb3 12 axb3 ♘e5 (12...♘d7!? 13 ♗g2 f5 is possible) 13 ♗g2 ♗h3 14 0-0 ♗xg2 15 ♔xg2 ♖e8 16 ♗b2 ♗f8 17 ♖bd1 c6 18 ♕c2 ♕c7 and White has only a minimal advantage, Bareev-Mokry, Trnava 1989.

W



9 ♘d5

White forgets to develop. 9 b3!? is possible.

9...0-0 10 ♗g2 f5 11 exf5

Or: 11 ♘e2 fxe4 12 fxe4 ♘de5 ∓; 11 f4 ♘c5 12 exf5 ♗xf5 ∓; 11 ♗h3 ♘ce5 12 exf5 ♗xf5 13 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 with an attack.

11...♗xf5 12 ♘e3 ♗e6 13 f4

The following opening of lines is quite effective.

13...d5! 14 ♘xd5 ♖e8 15 ♘f3

15 ♘e2 ♗g4 −+.

15...♗c5 16 ♔f1

16 ♔d1 ♘f6 17 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 18 ♕c2 ♗g4 19 ♗d2 ♘d4 20 ♕d3 ♖ad8 −+.

16...♘b6!

Black has a very strong attack, and won quickly in Psakhis-Gofshtein, Israel 1996: 17 ♘g5 ♗f5! 18 b3 ♘b4 19 ♗f3 ♘6xd5 20 ♗xd5+ ♘xd5 21 ♕xd5+ ♕xd5 22 cxd5 ♗d4 0-1.

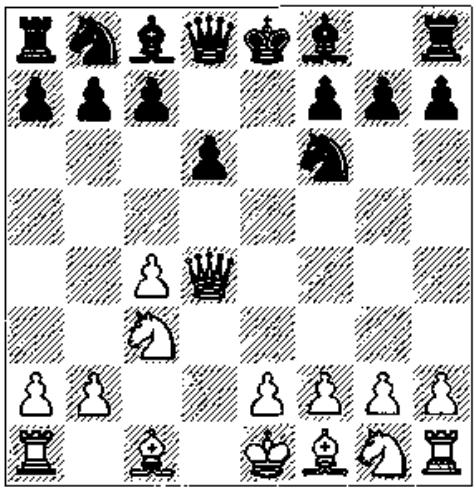
Conclusion: The tactics in this line are even more spectacular, but generally it is Black who has the initiative.

9 3 ♘c3 exd4 4 ♕xd4 ♘f6

In this chapter we study the position after...

1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘c3 exd4 4 ♕xd4 ♘f6 *(D)*

W



As Black missed his chance to win a tempo, White has choice of several additional set-ups for his pieces.

Here Black is trying to play mostly according to general plans, avoiding the sharper tactical plans to be found in Chapter 8. However, White's extra freedom affords him some possibilities to disrupt these general plans, for example with moves like 5 ♗g5 and 5 e4. White may also continue cautiously, trying to stop Black from reaching his goal in the positional sense, and the plan of fianchettoing both bishops is a good example of this.

Now:

A: 5 ♗g5 62
B: 5 e4 63
C: 5 b3 64
D: 5 g3 65

5 ♘f3 is a rather planless move, and Black easily secures good activity:

a) After 5...g6 various transpositions are possible, but note that 6 ♗g5 ♗g7 7 ♕e3+ is not dangerous: 7...♔f8 8 g3 h6 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 ♗g2 ♘c6 11 0-0 ♔g7 12 ♖ad1 ♖e8 13 ♕c1 ♗xc3 14 ♕xc3+ ♕f6 15 ♕xf6+ ♔xf6 16 ♖d2 a5 = Aleksandrov-Belikov, Voskresensk 1993.

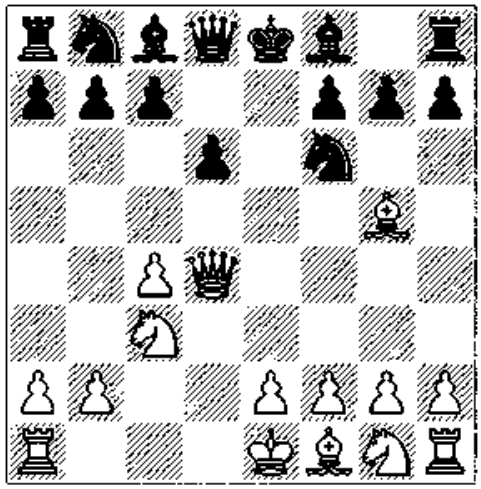
b) 5...♘c6 6 ♕d2 ♗e6 7 e4 (7 e3 is met by an active break in the centre: 7...d5! 8 ♘g5 ♗b4 9 a3 ♗xc3 10 ♕xc3 0-0 11 ♗e2 ♗g4 12 ♘f3 ♖e8 13 0-0 ♘e5 14 ♘xe5 ♗xe2 15 ♖e1 ♘e4 16 ♕c2 ♖xe5 17 ♕xe2 dxc4 18 ♕xc4 ♕h4 19 g3 ♕f6 20 f4 ♖e7 ∓ Uhlmann-Klinger, Szirak 1985) 7...♘e5 8 b3 (8 ♘xe5 dxe5 9 ♕c2 ♗c5 ∓) 8...♘xf3+ 9 gxf3 g6 10 ♗b2 ♗g7 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 ♖d1 ♖e8 13 ♘b5 a6 14 ♘d4 ♗d7 ∓. In Hirzel-Markowski, Berne 1996 the end was very quick: 15 ♕c1 ♕e7 16 ♗d3 ♗h3 17 ♘e2 ♗g2 0-1.

A)

5 ♗g5 *(D)*

The bishop gets to g5 without delay, pinning the knight, and a later ♕d2

B



has more point, as it will no longer shut in the bishop on c1.

5...♗e7

5...♘c6 6 ♕d2 ♗e6 7 e4 h6 8 ♗e3 ♘e5 9 b3 ♘eg4 10 ♗d4 c5 11 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 12 ♘ge2 g6 13 g3 ♗g7 14 ♗g2 0-0 15 ♖d1! a6 (15...♘e8!?) 16 ♕xd6 ♕a5 17 ♕d2 b5 (17...♖fd8 18 ♘d5 ±) 18 ♘d5 ♕xd2+ 19 ♖xd2 ± Lautier-Romero, Pamplona 1992/3.

6 e3

6 ♘f3 ♘c6 7 ♕d2 ♗g4 disrupts White a little, though after 8 ♘d4 ♘e5 9 e4 h6 10 ♗e3 ♕d7 11 f4 ♘c6 12 h3 ♗h5 13 ♘f5 ♗g6 14 g4 0-0-0 15 0-0-0 h5 16 ♗e2 White had nothing to complain about in Bosboom Lanchava-Kosteniuk, Elista wom OL 1998.

6...0-0

6...♘c6!? 7 ♕d2 ♗e6 8 ♘f3 ♘e5! is an alternative, as the central symmetry that arises is welcome for Black: 9 ♘xe5 dxe5 10 ♕c2 c6 11 ♗e2 0-0 ½-½ Flear-Davies, Tel-Aviv 1989.

7 ♘f3 ♘c6 8 ♕d2 ♗f5

8...h6 9 ♗h4 ♗g4 (9...♗f5 10 ♗e2 ♘e4 11 ♗xe7 ½-½ Grivas-Jansa, Gausdal 1993) 10 ♗e2 ♕d7 11 ♖d1 ♖fe8 12 0-0 a6 13 ♖fe1 ♖ad8 14 b3 ♕c8 15 ♕c1 = Gasthofer-Obodchuk, Pardubice 1993.

9 ♗d3 ♗xd3 10 ♕xd3 ♘e5

10...h6!?.

11 ♘xe5

11 ♕e2!?.

11...dxe5 12 ♕f5 ♘e8 13 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 14 ♘d5

14 0-0 ♘d6 15 ♕d3 ♖fd8 =.

14...♕d6 15 0-0 c6

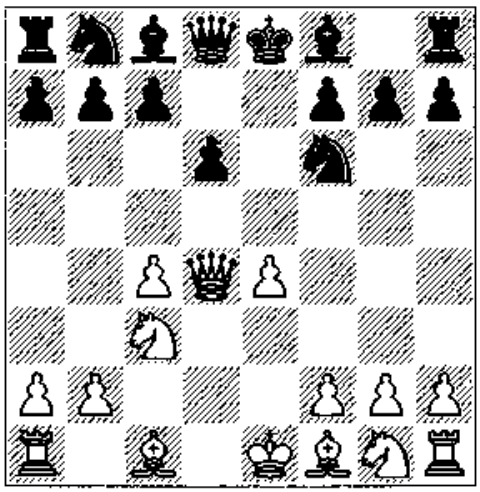
White has a minimal advantage, which he managed to exploit in Seirawan-Benjamin, USA Ch (Salt Lake City) 1999. Generally, however, Black should hold.

Conclusion: White's additional possibility with ♗g5 and ♕d2 is not extremely dangerous, but there is no clear reason for Black to allow it.

B)

5 e4 *(D)*

B



5...♘c6

5...g6!? 6 ♗e3 ♗g7 7 ♕d2 0-0 8 f3 (this position can arise from a rare

sideline of the Sämisch King's Indian) 8...♗e6 9 ♖d1 ♘bd7 10 b3 c6 11 ♘ge2 ♕a5 12 ♘d4 ♖ad8 13 ♗e2 ♘e5 14 0-0 c5 15 ♘c2 ♘e8 16 ♘a4 ♕xd2 17 ♗xd2 ♘c6, Douven-Miles, Wijk aan Zee 1989.

6 ♕d1!?

White tries maintain a grip on the centre and a slight space advantage.

6 ♕d2 gives Black time to pursue his usual plans successfully. 6...♗e7, and now:

a) 7 ♗d3 0-0 8 b3 ♖e8 9 ♘ge2 a5 10 ♗b2 ♗f8 11 f3 ♘b4! 12 ♖d1 ♘xd3+ 13 ♕xd3 ♘d7! 14 0-0 ♘c5 15 ♕d4 c6 16 ♗a3 ♕e7 17 ♘f4 ♕g5 18 ♘d3 a4! 19 ♘xc5 dxc5 20 ♕d3 ♗h3 21 ♕e2 ♗xg2 22 ♕xg2 ♕e3+ 23 ♔h1 ♕xc3 ∓ Pinheiro-Galego, Lisbon 1995.

b) 7 ♘f3 0-0 8 ♗e2 ♖e8 9 0-0 ♗f8! 10 ♕c2 ♗g4 11 ♗e3 ♘e5 12 ♘xe5 dxe5 13 ♖fd1 ♕c8 14 f3 ♗e6 15 ♘d5 ♘d7 16 a3 a5! = Zedek-Novak, Bratislava 1991. Black's idea is 17 b3 c6 18 ♘b6 ♘xb6 19 ♗xb6 c5! ∓.

6...♗e6

6...g6 7 ♗d3 ♗g7 8 ♘ge2 0-0 9 ♗c2 ± gives White a stable pawn-centre.

7 ♘f3 g6

7...♘e5 8 ♘d4 ±.

8 h3 ♗g7 9 ♗e3 0-0 10 ♗e2 ♘d7

10...♘e5 11 ♘d2 ±.

11 0-0

11 ♖c1 ♘ce5 12 b3 ♘xf3+ 13 ♗xf3 c6 is not a problem for Black.

11...♘b6 12 ♘d5!

White is forced to start tactical operations, since the c4-pawn is weak. However, it is hard to say who is closer to getting an advantage in the forcing lines.

12...♗xb2 13 ♗g5 f6 14 ♗h6 ♗xa1 15 ♗xf8 ♔xf8

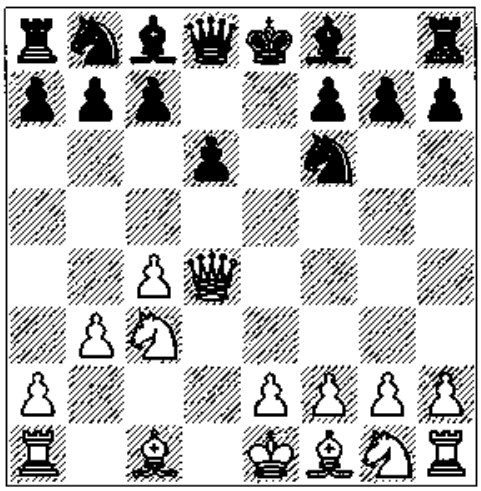
The game is unclear, I.Sokolov-Marin, Debrecen Echt 1992.

Conclusion: 5 e4 leads to a sharp fight in the centre, but Black has survived so far.

C)

5 b3 *(D)*

B



5...g6

Black can also develop his kingside quickly, trying to use the exposed position of the white queen to his advantage.

6 ♗b2

6 ♘d5 ♗g7 7 ♗h6 has been tried once, leading to a short forced draw: 7...♗xh6 (7...0-0!?) 8 ♘xf6+ ♔f8 9 ♘d7+ ♔g8 10 ♘f6+ ♔f8 11 ♘d7+ ♔g8 12 ♘f6+ ½-½ Touzane-Bricard, French Ch (Auxerre) 1996.

6...♗g7 7 g3

After 7 ♘d5?! ♘bd7 8 ♕e3+ Black has to move his king, but it turns out that White's loss of time is more

significant, and grants Black a strong initiative: 8...♔f8 9 ♘c3 (9 ♘f3?! ♘xd5 10 ♗xg7+ ♔xg7 11 cxd5 ♕f6 12 ♖c1 ♘b6 ∓ 13 ♕d2 ♗f5 14 ♖xc7 ♖ac8 15 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 gave Black an attack in Grotnes-Jansa, Gausdal 1992) 9...♘c5 10 ♘f3?! ♗f5 11 ♘d4?!, Ornstein-Ree, Budapest 1977, and now Black has the surprising and strong 11...♘g4!.

7...0-0 8 ♗g2 ♖e8 9 ♕d2 ♘bd7

This is the starting point for Black's positional plan, which consists of moves like ...♘c5, ...a5, ...c6 and later either ...a4 or ...♘e4.

10 ♘h3

10 ♘f3 transposes to note 'd21' to Black's 2nd move in Line A of Chapter 18.

10...♘c5 11 0-0

Or:

a) 11 ♘f4 a5 12 ♖d1 a4 13 b4 ♘cd7 14 ♘cd5 ♘xd5 15 ♘xd5 ♘e5 16 ♘e3 a3 17 ♗c3 ♘g4 with counterplay, Odessky-Tregubov, St Petersburg 1996.

b) 11 f3 d5 12 0-0-0 c6 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 g4 ♗d7 15 e3 ♖c8 16 ♘f2 ♗h6 17 ♖de1 ♕e7 18 ♘fd1 d4 19 ♕xd4 ♗g7 20 ♔b1 ♖ed8 ∓ Quinteros-Ree, Amsterdam 1973.

11..a5 12 ♖ad1 a4 13 b4 ♘ce4 14 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 15 ♕c2 ♗xb2 16 ♕xb2 a3!

Black makes full use of his far-advanced pawn. After 17 ♕b3 ♗xh3! 18 ♗xh3 ♕f6 19 ♖d3 ♕b2 20 ♖e1 c5 21 f3 ♕xb3 22 ♖xb3 ♘d2 23 ♖d3 ♘xc4 Black was winning in Wiedenkeller-Arnason, Helsinki 1986.

Conclusion: Black's general plans seem to work well if White just develops with normal moves.

D)

5 g3 g6

5...♘c6 is more precise, and will transpose to lines of Chapter 8.

6 ♗g2

6 ♕e3+ ♗e6 7 ♘h3 (Zaichik-Ehlvest, Komotini 1992) 7...♗e7 8 ♗g2 ♕c8 9 ♘f4 ♗xc4 10 b3 gives White enough compensation according to Ehlvest.

6...♗g7 7 ♕e3+!

This move seems to give Black some problems, as his development is disrupted.

7...♔f8

7...♕e7 8 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 leads to an endgame, but one where White maintains an edge: 9 b3 a5 10 ♗b2 c6 11 ♘a4! ♗e6 12 ♘f3 ♘bd7 13 ♘d4 ♖hc8 14 0-0 ± Kasparov-Short, Barcelona 1989.

8 ♘f3 ♘bd7 9 0-0 h6 10 b3 ♔g8 11 ♗b2 ♔h7 12 ♖ad1 ♖e8 13 ♕c1!

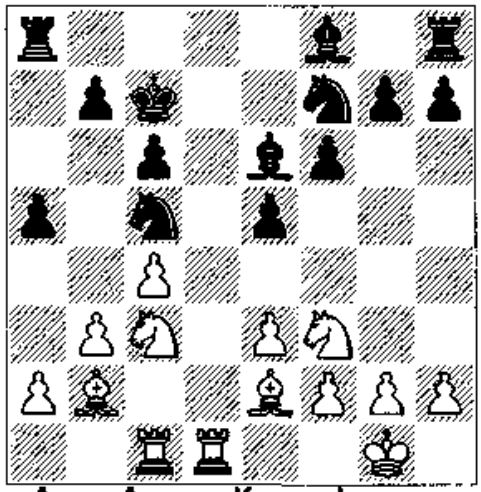
White is a little better. His positional plans in Ribli-Mokry, Vienna 1991 proved that Black has some problems.

Conclusion: Black has not found a clear way to counter the disruptive 7 ♕e3+.

10 3rd Move Alternatives for White

In this chapter we study the other 3rd moves for White after 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5. We focus our attention upon 3 dxe5, 3 d5 and 3 e3.

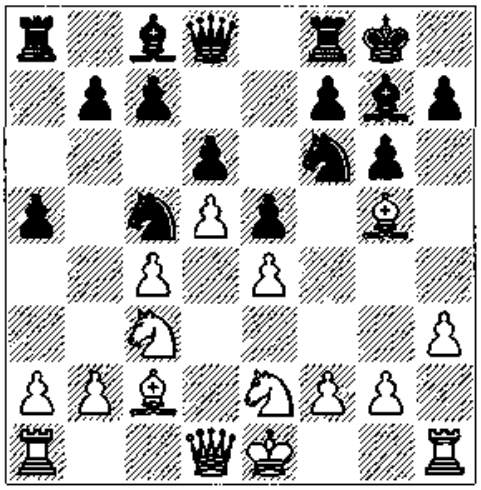
W



Aung Aung – Krasenkow
Shanghai 2000

The endgame arising after 3 dxe5 dxe5 4 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 favours Black. The fact that White has played c4 turns out to represent a significant weakness, as d4 and some dark squares on the queenside are controlled by Black. Black gets a good endgame with plans like ...c6 and ...♔c7, ...f6 and ...♘h6-f7, ...a5, ...♘d7-c5 and ...♗e6. The black king is useful in the centre, as long as White doesn't have too many open lines against it.

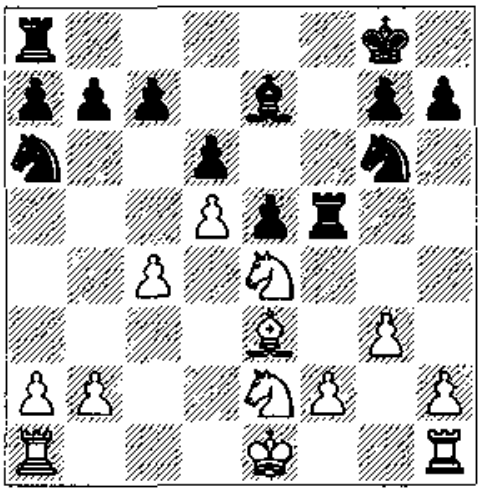
B



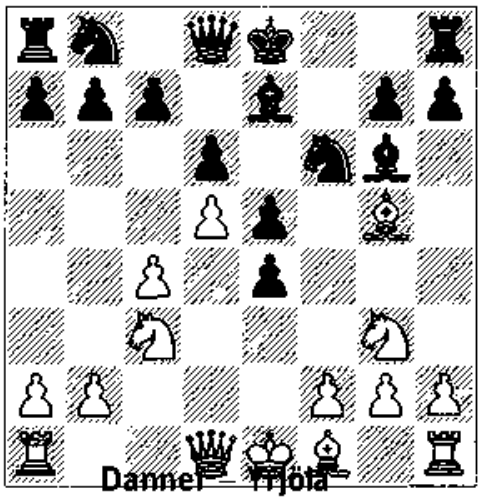
V. Mikhavelski – Gulko
Beersheba 1993

With the move 3 d5, White is aiming for King's Indian-type positions with a closed centre and some space advantage. This diagram shows a basic position from 3...g6 where Black has simply developed, delaying the ...f5 pawn-break.

The other positional plan for White, typical of King's Indian positions in which Black has played the thematic ...f5, is the use of the e4 outpost. In the following diagram, Black has left White in total control of the light squares, and in particular the e4-knight is very strong. Black has no active play and can only wait passively.

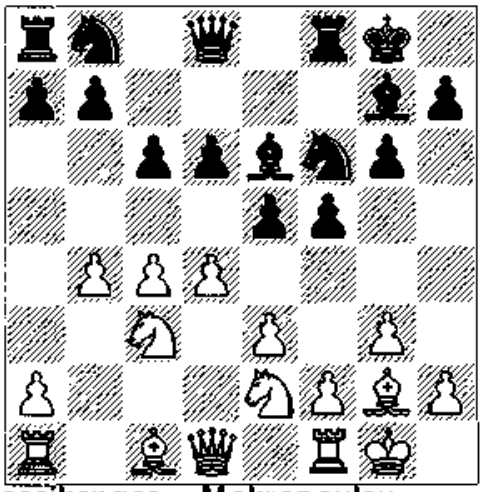


Reshevsky – Tartakower
Amsterdam 1950



Danner – Yrjölä
Batumi Echt 1999

In our main line, 3 d5 f5, the play focuses on the e4-square (*see diagram above*). White can try to build a positional stronghold, but Black has some means of fighting back, as there are enough black pieces to support e4. If White tries to attack the g6-bishop with 9 h4, then this pawn may become weak. And if White takes on f6, then Black can take back with the pawn, keeping the centre fluid. This latter plan has been topical in grandmaster games recently.



Paasikangas – Makropoulou
Manila wom OL 1992

After 3 e3 the plans are usually highly reminiscent of the plans against the English Opening, as the white set-up with g3 and e3 is quite passive. White may transform the game to some other position-types, but Black has no problems with them either. The end-game positions after, for example, 3...f5 4 dxe5 are also a thematic possibility here.

1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 *(D)*

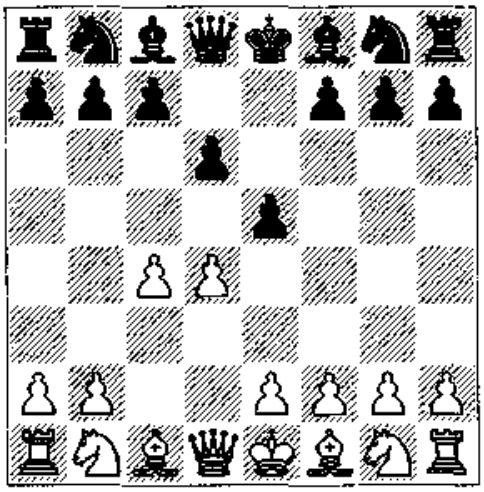
Now:

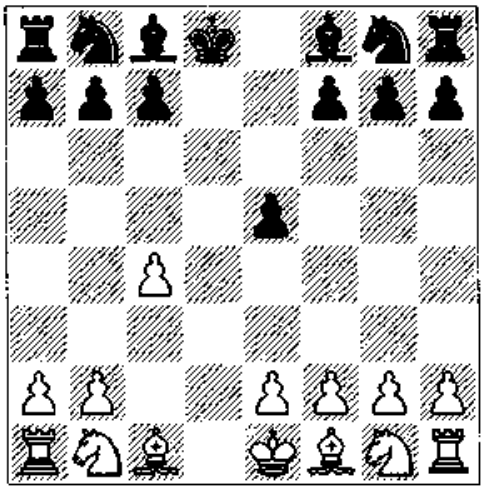
A:	**3 dxe5**	67
B:	**3 d5**	70
C:	**3 e3**	74

A)

3 dxe5 dxe5 4 ♕xd8+

This queenless middlegame is not dangerous for Black, as his king will





be quite well placed on c7 and Black has the useful outpost d4 available because of White's early pawn advance c4. It is worth comparing this variation to other relevant endings in this book, as here the move c4 proves to be clearly useless for White.

4 ♕c2 offers White nothing special. Black can just develop: 4...♘c6 5 e3 g6 (5...♘b4!? led to some fun in Rajić-Wockenfuss, Munich 1992: 6 ♕c3 ♘f6!? 7 a3 ♘c6 8 ♘d2 a5 9 ♗d3 ♗c5 10 ♘e2 0-0 11 ♘g3 ♘g4 12 h3 ♘xf2 13 ♔xf2 f5 14 ♘gf1 f4 15 ♘f3 fxe3+ 16 ♗xe3 ♘d4 with a messy position) 6 a3 ♗g7 7 ♘c3 ♘f6 8 ♗d2 0-0 9 0-0-0 (now Black is ready to take the initiative) 9...♗f5 10 e4 ♘d4 11 ♕d3 ♗e6 12 ♔b1 ♘d7 13 h4 ♘b6 14 ♘d5 c6 15 ♘xb6 axb6 16 h5 b5 17 cxb5 ♘xb5 18 ♕g3 ♕b6 19 ♗xb5 ♕xb5 20 ♘h3 ♖fd8 21 ♗c1 ♗c4 ∓ Medina-Bermejo Collado, Spanish Cht 1993.

4...♔xd8 *(D)*

5 ♘f3

Or:

a) 5 f4?! aims to open the position, but leads to a chaotic pawn-formation for White after 5...♗b4+ 6 ♘c3 ♗xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♗e6 8 fxe5 ♘e7 9 ♘f3 h6 10 e4 (10 ♘d4!?) 10...c5 ∓ Janakiev-Popchev, Podgorica 1991.

b) 5 g3 ♗e6 6 ♗g2 c6 7 b3 ♘a6 8 a3 ♘c5 9 ♘d2 a5! 10 ♗b2 f6 11 ♘gf3 ♘h6! 12 0-0 ♘f7 13 ♘e1 ♔c7 and Black has everything under control, Kliewe-Hennings, Neubrandenburg 1998.

c) 5 e4 c6 6 ♘f3 f6 7 ♗e3 ♘a6 8 ♘c3 ♔c7 9 0-0-0 ♗e6 10 ♗e2 ♘e7 11 ♘d2 ♘g6 12 g3 ♗h3!? = is the basic queenless middlegame, with White's bishop on e3 performing no special role, Belokon-Agrest, Osterskars 1994.

d) 5 ♘c3 is the other main move, when transpositions to the main line are highly likely, but there are also some independent ideas: 5...♗e6 6 b3 ♘d7 7 g3 c6 (7...♗b4 8 ♗d2 c6 9 ♗h3 ♗xh3 10 ♘xh3 h6 11 f3 ♘gf6 12 ♘f2 ♗a3 13 ♖d1 ♔c7 14 e3, Gheorghiu-Miles, Ostend 1988, 14...♖he8 =) 8 ♗h3 ♗xh3 9 ♘xh3 and then:

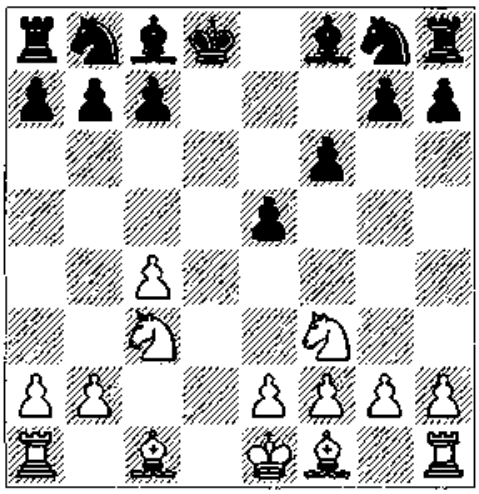
d1) 9...h6 10 ♗b2 ♘gf6 11 f3 ♗c5 12 ♘f2 ♖e8 13 ♘fe4 ♘xe4 14 ♘xe4 ♗b4+ 15 ♗c3 ♗xc3+ 16 ♘xc3 ♔c7

17 0-0-0 ♘c5 is a very drawish position, and Black was even playing for win after 18 ♖d2 ♖ad8 19 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 20 ♖d1 ♖e8 21 ♔c2 f5 22 h4 a5 in Michenka-Mokry, Czech Republic 1992.

d2) 9...♘gf6 10 f3 ♗b4 11 ♗d2 ♔e7 is also a quiet position, in which White's idea 12 g4?! proved to be wrong after 12...♘c5 13 g5 ♘fd7 14 ♘d5+ cxd5 15 ♗xb4 dxc4 16 ♖c1 a5! 17 ♗xc5+ (17 ♗a3 b5 18 bxc4 b4 ∓) 17...♘xc5 18 ♖xc4 ♖ac8 19 ♔d2 b5! 20 ♖c2 ♖hd8+ 21 ♔e3 ♘a6 22 ♖hc1 ♖xc2 23 ♖xc2 ♘b4 24 ♖c5 ♖d5! 25 ♖xd5 ♘xd5+ 26 ♔d2 b4 ∓ in Meulders-Seret, Lyons 1990.

5...f6 6 ♘c3 *(D)*

B



6...♗e6

Black's plan consists of moves like ...f6 and ...c6 to take control of the centre, ...♗e6 and ...♘d7 to develop, and ...♔c7 to place the king on a good square.

6...♘a6 7 ♗d2 ♗e6 8 e3 ♘c5 9 0-0-0 ♘h6 allows White an active plan: 10 ♖g1! a5 11 e4 ♘f7 12 g4! (12 ♗e3+ ♔c8 13 g4 g5 14 h4 h6 15 ♗e2 a4 is OK for Black, Meulders-Hort, Haifa Echt 1989) 12...h6 13 h4 ± intending g5.

7 e3

White opens a diagonal for the f1-bishop, and at the same time takes control of the weakened d4-square, but this move allows Black the new plan ...♘h6-f7-d6, bringing the knight nicely to the centre.

7 b3 c6 is also possible:

a) 8 ♗b2 ♘d7 9 h3 (9 g3 ♔c7 10 ♗g2 ♘h6 11 0-0 a5 12 ♖ac1 ♘c5 13 ♘d2 ♗e7 = Tisdall-Hodgson, Reykjavik 1989) 9...h5! 10 0-0-0 ♔c7 11 e3 h4 12 ♗e2 a5 13 ♘d2 ♘h6 14 ♘de4 ♘f7 = Lehtivaara-Yrjölä, Finnish Cht 2000.

b) 8 ♖g1! ♘d7 (8...h5!?) 9 g4 is one of the most critical tries. White's goal is to open lines on the kingside in order to get some activity against Black's king and centre. Black has tried many moves:

b1) 9...♘e7 10 ♗b2 g6?! 11 ♘e4 ♘g8 12 0-0-0 h6 13 ♘h4 ♗f7 14 ♖g3 ♔c7 15 ♖gd3 ♖d8 16 ♗g2 ± Röschlau-Schirmer, 2nd Bundesliga 1994/5.

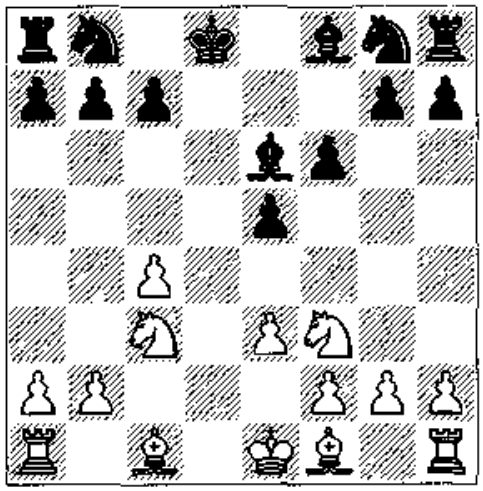
b2) 9...♔c7 10 ♗e3 ♗a3!?, Mukić-Jacimović, Kladovo 1991.

b3) 9...♗b4 10 ♗b2 a5 11 g5 a4 12 0-0-0 axb3 13 axb3 ♘e7 14 gxf6 gxf6 15 ♘e4 ♖f8 16 ♖g3 ♘f5 17 ♖h3 ♖f7 18 ♖h5 ♔e7 19 ♗h3 ♘d6 (Röschlau-Brecht, Germany 1997/8) and now White has the interesting possibility 20 ♗xe6 ♔xe6 21 ♘fg5+ fxg5 22 ♘xg5+ ♔e7 23 ♘xf7 ♘xf7 24 ♖xh7 ±.

b4) 9...a5 10 ♗b2 ♘c5 11 g5 a4 12 gxf6 gxf6 13 ♘d2 a3 14 ♗c1 ♘a6 15

♘de4 ♘b4 16 ♖b1 ♗f5 17 ♗g2 and White has pressure, Pirttilahti-Yrjölä, Jyväskylä 1994.

We now return to 7 e3 *(D)*:



B

7...♘d7 8 ♗e2 c6 9 0-0 ♘h6 10 ♖d1

10 b3 ♔c7 11 ♗b2 is maybe more precise, as it is not clear which are the most useful squares for the rooks.

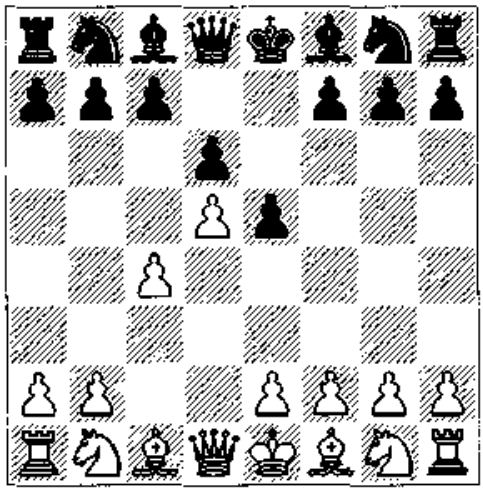
10...♘f7 11 b3 a5 12 ♗b2 ♔c7 13 ♖ac1 ♘c5

Black is a little better. He has made all the basic moves, and his position is very safe. It is difficult to see a plan for White, but Black can start a queenside expansion without any risks. The following game is a model example: 14 ♘d2 ♗e7 15 ♘de4 ♘xe4 16 ♘xe4 a4 17 ♘c3 axb3 18 axb3 ♗a3 19 ♗xa3 ♖xa3 20 ♖b1 ♖d8 21 ♖xd8 ♘xd8 22 ♔f1 ♗f5 23 ♖b2 ♘e6 24 ♗d1 ♖a8 25 ♗c2 ♗xc2 26 ♖xc2 ♘c5 27 b4 ♘d3 28 b5 f5 29 ♔e2 ♘c5 30 f3 ♖a3 31 bxc6 bxc6 32 ♘d1 ♖a1 33 ♔d2 g5 34 ♔e2 e4 35 ♔d2 h5 36 ♔e2 exf3+ 37 gxf3 g4 38 ♘f2 ♖g1 39 fxg4 fxg4 40 ♖d2 ♖g2 41 ♔f1 ♖xh2 42 ♖d4 ♘e6 43 ♘xg4 ♖h1+ 44 ♔g2 ♖h4 45 ♔g3 ♖xg4+ 46 ♖xg4 hxg4 47 ♔xg4 ♔d6 48 ♔f5 ♘c5 49 e4 ♘d7 50 ♔f4 ♔c5 51 ♔f5 ♔xc4 52 ♔e6 ♘b6 53 ♔d6 c5 54 e5 ♔d4 55 e6 ♘d5 0-1 Aung Aung-Krasenkow, Shanghai 2000.

Conclusion: Black has no problems in this endgame.

B)

3 d5 *(D)*



B

This move fixes the centre at once, and White is going to develop with ideas that are familiar from the King's Indian. Black has many viable plans. The fight for the centre, focusing on the e4-pawn, is the most direct approach.

3...f5

Or:

a) 3...♗f5!? with the idea ...e4 is a different possibility: 4 ♘c3 e4 5 ♕b3 (5 g3!?) 5...b6 6 e3 ♘d7 7 ♕a4 ♗e7 8 ♘ge2 ♗f6 9 ♘g3?! ♗xc3+ 10 bxc3 ♗g6 11 c5? ♘gf6 12 cxd6 cxd6 13 ♗b5 0-0 14 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 15 ♕xd7 ♘xd7 16

♗a3 ♘e5 17 ♗xd6 ♘d3+ 18 ♔e2 ♖fd8 ∓ Puuska-Ylijoki, Finnish Cht 1996.

b) 3...♗e7!? is another typical move, intending to exchange the bad bishop with ...♗g5:

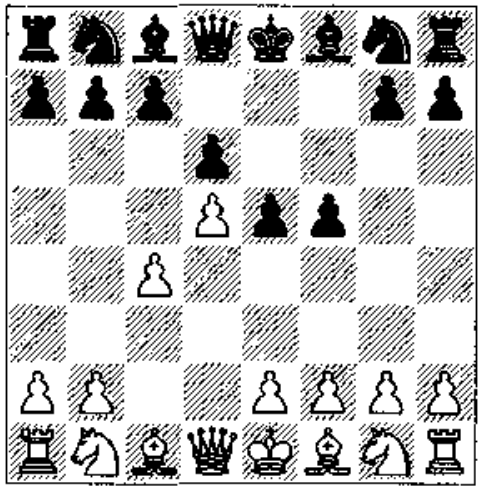
b1) 4 ♘c3 ♗g5 and now:

b11) 5 e3!? f5 6 g3 e4 7 f3 exf3?! (7...♘f6!? is an improvement proposed by Mikhalevski) 8 ♘xf3 ♗f6 9 ♘e2! c5 10 dxc6 ♘xc6 11 ♘f4 g6 12 ♗g2 ♘ge7? 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♔h1 ♕c7 15 ♖b1 a5 16 b3 a4 17 .♗b2 ± Mikhalevski-Kantsler, Rishon le Zion 2000.

b12) 5 e4 a5 6 ♗xg5 (6 g3 ♗xc1 7 ♖xc1 ♘e7 8 ♗g2 0-0 9 ♘f3 ♘a6 10 0-0 ♘c5 11 b3 h6 = Debnar-Novak, Slovakia 1997) 6...♕xg5 7 ♘f3 ♕e7 8 c5!? ♘f6 9 cxd6 cxd6 10 ♗b5+ ♗d7 11 ♘d2 0-0 12 0-0 ♖c8 13 ♕e2 ♘a6 14 ♘c4 ♖c5 15 ♗xd7 ♘xd7 16 a4 ± Mikhalevski-Fioramonti, Biel 1992.

b2) 4 e4 ♗g5 5 ♘d2 ♘d7 (5...c6 6 g3 ♘f6 7 ♘gf3 ♗h6 8 h4 0-0 9 ♗e2 a5 10 ♘g5 ♘a6 11 g4 ♘c5 12 f3 a4 13 ♘f1 ♘e8 14 ♗e3 ♕a5+ 15 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 16 ♔xd2 f6 17 ♘h3 ♗xe3+ 18 ♘xe3 ♘c7 19 ♘f2 ♗d7 20 ♘d3 ♘xd3 21 ♗xd3 c5 = Milov-Hickl, Pula Z 2000) 6 ♘gf3 ♗h6 7 ♗d3 (7 b4 a5 8 bxa5 ♖xa5 9 ♘b3 ♗xc1! 10 ♘xa5 ♗b2 =) 7...a5 8 0-0 ♘gf6 9 b3 ♘c5 10 ♗c2 (Avrukh-Kantsler, Israel 2000) 10...0-0 11 a3 c6 12 ♖b1 cxd5 13 cxd5 (13 exd5 e4 14 ♘d4 e3 15 ♘2f3 ♘ce4 =) 13...b5 with equality.

We now return to 3...f5 *(D)*:



4 e4!?

Or:

a) 4 e3?! is too passive, and standard play gives Black a good position; for example, 4...g6 5 ♗e2 ♗g7 6 ♘c3 ♘d7 7 ♘f3 ♘h6!? 8 h4 0-0 9 ♕c2 e4 10 ♘d4 ♘e5 11 ♗d2 c5 12 dxc6 bxc6 ∓ Plass-Popchev, Val Thorens 1990.

b) 4 ♘c3 is the older main line, but Black usually has very active centre pawns which secure him a good position; for example, 4...♘f6 (4...g6 5 e4 ♗h6!? 6 exf5 ♗xf5 7 ♗xh6 ♘xh6 8 ♕d2 ♘f7 9 ♘ge2 ♘d7 10 ♘g3 0-0 11 ♗d3 ♕f6 12 0-0 ♘c5 13 ♗c2 a5 = ½-½ Pogosian-Stojanović, Rimavska Sobota 1992) and now:

b1) 5 g3 ♘bd7 6 ♗g2 a5 7 ♕a4 ♗e7 8 b4?! 0-0 9 a3 ♘b6 10 ♕b3 axb4 11 ♕xb4 ♕e8 ∓ Armas Wohlers-Markowski, Lyons 1995.

b2) 5 ♕c2 ♗e7 6 f3 0-0 7 ♗d2 ♘a6 8 a3 c6 9 e4 fxe4 10 fxe4 cxd5 11 cxd5 ♘g4 12 ♘h3 ♗h4+ 13 g3 ♘xh2 14 0-0-0 ♘xf1 15 gxh4 ♗xh3 16 ♖xh3 ♖f2 is much better for Black, Sleisz-Borsos, Eger 1993.

b3) 5 f4 e4 6 e3 g6 7 ♘h3 ♗g7 8 ♘f2 a5 9 ♗e2 ♘bd7 10 ♕c2 ♘c5 11 ♗d2 0-0 12 ♘b5 c6 13 ♘d4 ♗d7 14 0-0 ♔h8 = Fayard-McNab, Hastings Challengers 1988/9.

b4) 5 e4 ♘xe4 6 ♘xe4 fxe4 7 ♘e2 (7 h4 ♘d7 8 ♗g5 ♗e7 9 ♕h5+ g6 10 ♕h6 ♗xg5 11 hxg5 ♕e7 12 ♘e2 ♘c5 13 ♘g3 a5 14 ♖h4 ♗f5 ∓ Carneiro-Pereira, Lisbon 1995) 7...♗e7 8 ♘g3 0-0 9 ♘xe4 ♗f5 10 ♗d3 ♘d7 11 ♗e3 ♗xe4 12 ♗xe4 ♗g5 is equal, and similar to note 'c' to Black's 6th move.

b5) 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 ♗xf6 (6 ♕c2 ♘xd5!; 6 g3 ♘xd5!) 6...♗xf6 7 e4 0-0 8 ♗d3 g6 and here:

b51) 9 ♘ge2 f4 10 f3 ♘a6 11 ♕d2 ♗h4+ 12 g3 ♗g5 13 gxf4 ♗xf4 14 ♘xf4 ♕h4+ 15 ♔e2 ♖xf4 16 ♖agl ♗d7 17 ♖g3 ♖af8 18 ♕e3 ♕h5 19 ♗c2 ♖xf3 −+ Tousif-McNab, Manila OL 1992.

b52) 9 ♘f3 ♘a6 10 ♖c1 ♔h8 11 h4 f4 12 ♖h2 c6 13 ♔e2 ♗g4 14 dxc6 bxc6 15 ♕a4 ♕b6 16 ♕a3 ♗e7 17 ♔e1 ♘c5 18 ♗c2 a5 ∓ Petrović-Medak, Djakovo 1994.

b53) 9 ♕c2 ♗g5 10 ♘f3 ♗h6 11 a3 a5 12 ♖b1 c5 is unclear, Thorfinnsson-Bern, Hafnarfjordur 1995.

b6) 5 ♘f3 ♗e7 and now:

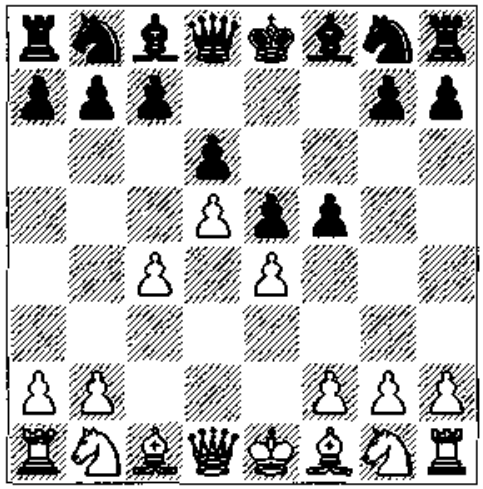
b61) 6 ♗g5 0-0 7 e3 ♔h8 8 ♗e2 ♘a6 9 ♗xf6 (9 0-0? ♘xd5 10 ♘xd5 ♗xg5 ∓ Grobovsek-Kodrić, Portorož 1995) 9...♗xf6 10 0-0 e4 gives Black a slight advantage.

b62) 6 ♕c2 ♘a6 7 b4 0-0 8 a3 c5 9 b5 ♘c7 10 a4 e4 11 ♘gl ♘g4 12 h3 ♘e5 13 e3 g5 14 ♗e2 ♕e8 15 a5 ♕g6 16 ♗d2 ♗d7 17 ♕b1 ½-½ Ferkingstad-F.Brunner, Zanka girls Ech 1995.

b63) 6 e4 ♘xe4 7 ♘xe4 fxe4 8 ♘d2 ♗f5 9 ♕c2 ♘a6 10 ♘xe4 0-0 11 ♗d3 ♘b4 12 ♕b3 ♘xd3+ 13 ♕xd3 ♕e8 14 0-0 ♕g6 15 f3 h5 = Auchenberg-Vorotnikov, Copenhagen 1990.

We now return to 4 e4 *(D)*:

B



4...fxe4

Or:

a) 4...♘f6!? is playable: 5 exf5 ♗xf5 6 ♘c3 (6 ♗d3 ♗xd3 7 ♕xd3 ♗e7 8 ♘c3 0-0 9 f3 ♘fd7 10 ♗e3 ♗h4+ 11 g3 ♗g5 12 ♘e4 ♗xe3 13 ♕xe3 ♘a6 14 ♘e2 ♘dc5 15 0-0 ♘xe4 16 fxe4 ♕d7 = Sanz Navarro-Moran Rodriguez, Zaragoza 1998) 6...♘bd7 7 ♘ge2 ♗g6 (7...♕e7!?, with the point 8 ♘g3 ♗g6 9 ♗d3 e4, is playable) 8 ♘g3 c6 (8...e4 9 ♗e2 a5 10 h4 h6 11 ♘h5 ♘c5 12 f4 ♗f7 13 ♗e3 ♘fd7 14 ♗h5 ♕f6 15 ♗xf7+ ♕xf7 16 ♕c2 ♕f5 17 0-0-0 0-0-0 18 ♘b5 ± Kelečević – Schmidt-Schäffer, Berne 1996) 9 ♗d3 ♗f7 10 0-0 ♗e7 11 ♘ge4 cxd5 12 cxd5 ♘xe4 13 ♗xe4 0-0 14 ♗e3 ♗g5 15 ♕c2 ± Mikhalevski-Van der Wiel, Leeuwarden 1995.

b) 4...f4!? 5 g3 and now:

b1) 5...fxg3 6 hxg3 g6 7 ♘c3 ♗g7 8 ♗e2 ♘f6 9 ♗e3 ♗d7 10 g4 ♕c8 11 f3 ± Norevall-Ekström, Gotland 1997.

b2) 5...♘f6 might be possible, with the point 6 ♘c3 (6 gxf4 ♘xe4) 6...g5 7

h4 (7 ♗e2 ♗g7) 7...fxg3 8 hxg5 gxf2+ 9 ♔xf2 ♘g4+.

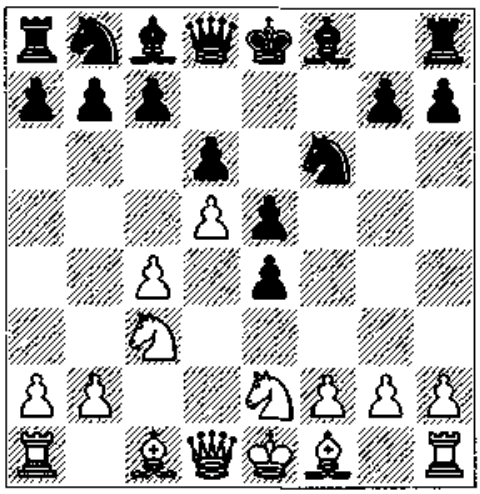
5 ♘c3 ♘f6

5...♗f5 6 ♘ge2 ♗g6 7 ♘g3 ♕h4 8 ♘gxe4 ± is a basic tactical trick.

6 ♘ge2 *(D)*

6 ♗g5 ♘bd7 (6...♗f5!? 7 g4 ♗g6 8 ♗g2 h6 9 ♗h4 ♘bd7 10 ♘xe4 ♗e7 11 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 12 ♘g3 ♘d7 13 ♗e4 ♗xe4 14 ♘xe4 0-0 15 ♘e2 ♘f6 16 ♘2g3 ♘xe4 17 ♘xe4 ♖f4 18 ♕e2 ♕d7 19 h3 ♖af8 20 0-0 ♖f3 gives Black counterplay, Kelečević-Espig, Schellenberg 1991) 7 ♘ge2 (7 ♘xe4 ♗e7 8 ♗xf6!?) 7...♗e7 8 ♘g3 allows Black a tactical trick with 8...♘xd5 9 ♘xd5 ♗xg5 10 ♘xe4 ♗e7 ∓ Soln-Tratar, Slovenian Cht (Bled) 1999.

B



6...♗f5!?

Or:

a) 6...♘bd7 7 ♘g3 ♘c5 8 ♗g5 (8 ♗e3 b6 9 ♗e2 a5 10 0-0 g6 11 ♗xc5 bxc5 12 ♘gxe4 ♗h6 13 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 14 ♘b5 ♕e7 15 ♗g4 0-0 16 a4 ♗f5 is slightly better for Black, Gerber-Okhotnik, Prague 1988) 8...♗e7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 ♘cxe4 ♘xe4 11 ♘xe4 0-0 12 ♗d3 ± Mikhalevski-Finkel, Beersheba 1996.

b) 6...g6 7 ♘g3 ♗f5 8 ♗g5 ♘bd7 9 ♘gxe4 ♗e7 10 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 11 ♗d3 0-0 12 0-0 ♘h5 13 g3 ♕d7 14 ♗e2 ♘g7 15 g4 ♗xe4 16 ♘xe4 ♖f4 17 f3 gives White a slight advantage, Kelečević-Mohr, Switzerland 1996.

c) 6...♗e7 is a safe continuation, if Black just aims to draw: 7 ♘g3 0-0 8 ♘gxe4 ♗f5 9 ♗d3 ♘bd7 10 ♗e3 ♘xe4 11 ♗xe4 ♗g5 12 ♕h5 ♘f6 13 ♕xg5 ♘xe4 = Alburt-Miles, USA Ch (Cambridge Springs) 1988.

7 ♘g3 ♗g6 8 ♗g5 ♗e7

8...♘bd7?! is not correct:

a) 9 ♘cxe4 ♗e7 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 (10...gxf6 11 ♕f3 ±; White controls the f5-square) 11 ♗d3 0-0 12 0-0 ♗h4 13 ♘e2 ♕e7 (13...♘f6 14 ♘2c3 ♘xe4 15 ♗xe4 ±) 14 ♕c2 ♖f7 15 ♘2c3 (15 ♘4c3 ♗xd3 16 ♕xd3 ♘c5 17 ♕c2 e4 ∓) 15...♖af8 16 b4 ± Avrukh-Bologan, Biel 1999.

b) 9 ♘gxe4 ♗xe4 10 ♘xe4 ♗e7 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♗e2 0-0 13 ♗g4 ♘c5 14 ♘xc5 dxc5 15 0-0 ± Rapoport-Vigus, Witley 1998. White's bishop is clearly more active than its black counterpart.

9 h4

9 ♗xf6 gxf6 gives Black good centre pawns, and indeed he is already slightly better unless sharp ideas to fight for the light squares work:

a) 10 ♘gxe4 f5 11 ♘g3 ♘d7 12 ♗e2 (12 ♘h5 0-0 13 ♗e2 ♘f6 14 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 is slightly better for Black, Müller-Albrecht, Crailsheim 1995) 12...♗g5 13 ♗h5 ♘f6 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♗xg6 hxg6 16 ♘ge2 ♗h6 17

f4 ♕e7 18 ♕d3 ♖ae8 19 ♕g3 ♔f7 ∓ Kolev-Ermenkov, Bankia 1992.

b) 10 h4!? ♕d7 (10...h6 11 ♘f5!? fights for the light squares; 10...h5 11 ♗e2! attacks the weakened h5-pawn; 10...e3 11 fxe3 f5 12 h5 ♗h4 13 hxg6 ♗xg3+ 14 ♔d2 ±) 11 f3! (11 h5 ♗f7 12 f3 ♖g8! ∓) and now:

b1) 11...exf3!? and then:

b11) 12 gxf3 f5 13 h5 ♗f7 14 ♗d3 (14 ♗h3 ♗h4 ∓) 14...e4 15 fxe4 f4 16 ♘f5 ♗f6 is unclear.

b12) 12 ♕xf3 h5 13 ♗d3 ♗xd3 14 ♕xd3 ♕g4 15 ♘f5 ♕xg2 16 0-0-0 with enough compensation.

b2) 11...f5 12 h5 ♗f7 13 fxe4 (13 ♕b3!?) 13...fxe4 14 ♘gxe4 ± Mikhalevski-Milos, Cappelle la Grande 2000.

9...h5 10 ♗xf6

10 ♕c2 ♘a6 11 ♘cxe4 ♘xe4 12 ♘xe4 ♘c5 13 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 14 ♗d3 ♘xd3+ 15 ♕xd3 0-0-0 16 f3 ♖df8 = Dive-Rogers, Wellington 1988.

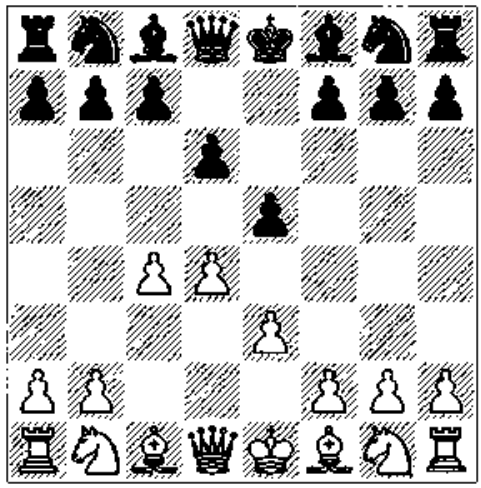
10...♗xf6 11 ♗e2 e3 12 ♗xh5 exf2+ 13 ♔f1 ♗xh5 14 ♘xh5 ♘d7 15 ♘e4 ♕e7

∓ Danner-Yrjölä, Batumi Echt 1999.

Conclusion: 3 d5 is an interesting option, which has been played a few times by some strong grandmasters quite recently. Black should get a good position in the main line.

C)

3 e3 *(D)*


B

3...f5!?

This aggressive move is closest to the spirit of the book, but there are also many safe moves.

a) 3...♘d7 aims for an Old Indian-type position, with a very stable structure for Black:

a1) 4 ♘f3 g6 5 ♘c3 ♗g7 6 ♗e2 ♘e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 b3 h6 9 ♗b2 f5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♕c2 ♘c6 12 ♘d5 e4 13 ♘d4 ♘xd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 15 exd4 c6 16 ♘f4 ♕e8 17 d5 ♘f6 18 dxc6 bxc6 19 g3 g5 20 ♘g2 f4! gave Black an attack in Alonso-Vescovi, São Paulo 1999.

a2) 4 f4 g6 5 fxe5 dxe5 6 ♘f3 ♗g7 7 ♘c3 ♘gf6 8 ♗e2 0-0 9 0-0 ♕e7 10 b4 c6 11 b5 ♘g4 is a complicated position, Bach-Berg, Hamburg 1996.

a3) 4 ♘c3 ♘gf6 5 ♘f3 (5 ♗d3 g6 6 ♘ge2 ♗g7 7 0-0 0-0 8 f4 ♖e8 9 ♘g3, Paasikangas-Lehto, Finnish Cht 1996, might be possible for White, intending 10 f5!?) 5...c6 6 ♗e2 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♖b1 is a basic position from the Old Indian Defence, where Black has no problems.

b) 3...♘c6 4 ♘c3 (4 d5 ♘ce7 is a Modern-type position, where White's e3 might be close to a loss of tempo; for example, 5 ♘c3 f5 6 ♗d3 ♘f6 7 ♗c2 g6 8 ♘f3 ♗h6 9 b4 0-0 10 ♗b3

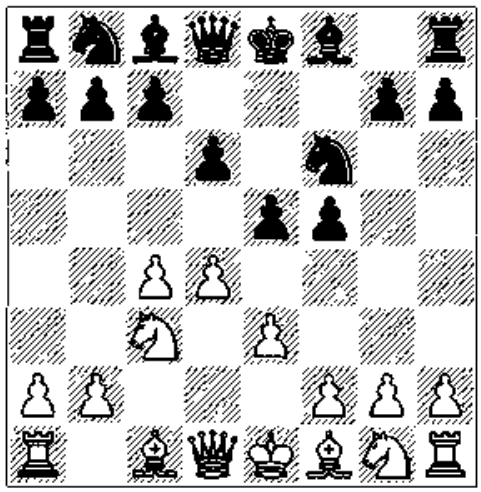
a5 11 bxa5 ♖xa5 12 a4 ♔h8, Paasikangas-Lindqvist, Finnish Cht 1996, and White's position looks a bit odd, but maybe it is possible to continue with normal plans like 13 ♗a3 b6 14 ♗b4 ♖a8 15 a5) 4...g6 5 ♘f3 ♗g7 6 ♗e2 ♘h6 is a line of the Modern Defence.

4 ♘c3

Here too White can get an endgame, but the most he can hope for is slight pressure. 4 dxe5 dxe5 5 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 6 ♘f3 ♘c6 7 ♘c3 h6 8 ♗d2 e4 9 ♘d4 ♘e5 (9...♘xd4!?) 10 0-0-0 c6 11 ♗e2 ♔c7 12 f4 ♘f7 13 g4 g6 14 ♖hg1 ± Akchelov-Shukan, Alushta 1997.

4...♘f6 *(D)*

4...c6!? 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 leads to a new version of this queenless middlegame, but Black is again OK: 7 b3 ♘h6 8 ♗b2 ♗e6 9 ♘f3 ♘f7 10 0-0-0+ ♘d7 11 h4 ♔c7 12 g3 ♖e8 13 ♗h3 ♘c5 14 ♔b1 ♗c8 15 b4 e4, Psaras-Makropoulos, Serres 1990.



5 g3

Or:

a) 5 ♘f3 e4 6 ♘d2 is an important transposition to Line B of Chapter 6.

b) 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8, and now:

b1) 7 ♗d2 and then:

b11) 7...c6 8 ♘f3 ♘bd7 9 0-0-0 ♔e7 (9...♔c7!?) 10 ♗e2 g6 11 ♘e1 a5 12 f3 ♗g7 13 e4 f4 14 ♘d3 b6 15 g3 g5 16 gxf4 gxf4 17 ♖hg1 ♖g8 18 ♗f1 ♗a6 19 b3 ♗h8 20 ♗h3 ± Nedeljković-Puc, Belgrade 1952.

b12) 7...♗e6 8 ♘f3 ♘bd7 9 0-0-0 c6 10 ♘a4 ♔c7 11 ♗e2 ♘e4 12 ♖hf1 ♗e7 13 ♘c3 ♘xd2 14 ♖xd2 g5 ∓ Pina Sierra-Antipova, Litohoro 1999.

b2) 7 b3 c6 8 ♗b2 ♗e6 (8...♔c7 9 0-0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♗d3 e4!? 11 ♗c2 a5 12 ♘h3 ♗d6 13 ♘e2 ♖e8 14 ♘ef4 ♘e5 15 ♖d2 ♗b4 16 ♖d4 h6 17 ♖hd1 ♗d7 18 a3 ♗c5 19 ♖4d2 ♖ad8 20 ♘g1 g5 ∓ Miles-Larsen, Las Palmas 1977) 9 ♘f3 ♘bd7 10 ♗e2 ♗d6 11 0-0 ♔e7 12 ♖fd1 ♖hd8 13 h3 h6 14 ♘a4 ½-½ Illescas-Magem, Barcelona 1990.

b3) 7 ♘f3 ♘c6 8 ♗d2 ♗e6 9 0-0-0 ♔e8 10 h3 a6 (10...e4!?) 11 e4 ♘xe4 12 ♘xe4 fxe4 13 ♘g5 ♗f5 14 g4 ♗g6 15 ♗g2 ♖d8 16 ♗e3 ♖xd1+ 17 ♖xd1 ♘b4 and Black seems to be fine, Rubinstein-Sämisch, Baden-Baden 1925.

5...g6 6 ♗g2 ♗g7 7 ♘ge2 0-0 8 0-0 c6

Because White has no pressure against e5, Black has a free hand to develop, more in the style of the English Opening.

9 b4 ♗e6 10 d5 ♗f7 11 ♖b1 ♕d7 12 a4 e4 13 a5 cxd5 14 cxd5 ♘a6

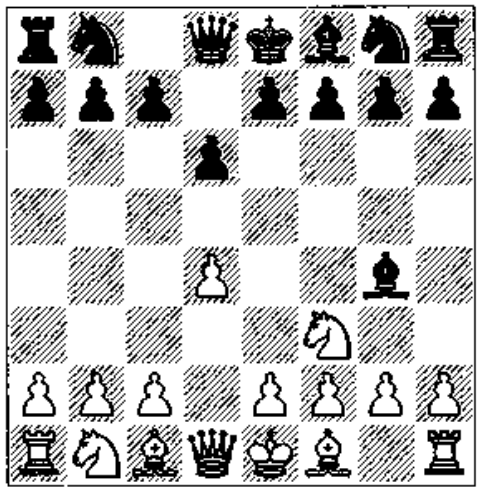
∓ Paasikangas-Makropoulou, Manila wom OL 1992.

Conclusion: 3 e3 is too passive to give Black any real problems.

11 The Hodgson Variation (2 ♘f3 ♗g4): Introduction

The variation 1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 *(D)* was played in 1938 by Rudolf Spielmann and used in the 1960s by Stein and Kavalek among others.

W



For those who think that 2...♗g4 might be somewhat unsound, we would like to mention that Mr Solid, Tigran Petrosian, employed the move a few times. But the towering figure of the line is Julian Hodgson, who popularized it with many dynamic performances. Among the other practitioners, the contributions of Miles, Adams, Hickl and Jansa to the theoretical development of the line are worth mentioning.

The line 3 c4 ♘d7 brings to mind the Torre Attack (1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 and 3 ♗g5). Here too the idea is to develop the queenside first so that the queen's bishop doesn't remain blocked behind the pawn-chain. The system is also reminiscent of some Old Indian lines where Black brings the bishop out at an early stage. However, in the Old Indian Black has played ...♘f6, which is not our only option here.

Black can also opt for very uncompromising play with the early exchange 3...♗xf3, which has some similarity with certain Nimzo-Indian Defence lines. Black makes White's pawn-formation clumsy and will then concentrates on limiting the power of White's bishop-pair with suitable pawn-chain strategy.

The other important line is 3 e4, with positions more akin to Semi-Open games after 3...♘f6 4 ♘c3.

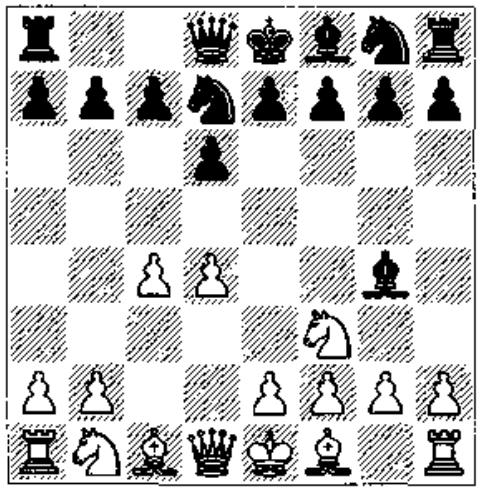
The statistics (*see table*) suggest that the third move alternatives to 3 c4 and 3 e4 are not very dangerous. It appears that the 1 d4 player's standard choice 3 c4 scores best but things are not so clear. After 3 e4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 the aggressive main line 5 h3 ♗h5 6 g4 ♗g6 7 ♕e2 c6 8 h4 has scored well, while with the more routine alternatives like 5 ♗e2 or 4 ♗d3 White usually doesn't get anything at all.

Variation	Games	W's score	W's rating	W's Performance
3 c4	969	58%	2426	2474
3 e4	734	55%	2406	2443
3 e3	203	45%	2355	2338
3 ♘bd2	185	43%	2345	2325
3 g3	177	52%	2361	2393

12 3 c4 ♘d7

After 1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 c4, 3...♘d7 *(D)* has been more popular than the immediate exchange, 3...♗xf3.

W



However, some of the main practitioners, such as Hodgson, tend to play ...♗xf3 after certain choices by White. Especially after the move 4 g3 there is no better reply than 4...♗xf3, which is considered in Line B of Chapter 13.

The table below gives the statistics for White's most important moves.

The rather rare 4 d5 (Line A) has scored surprisingly well in practice although it doesn't look theoretically dangerous. The idea of the move (i.e. to try to interfere with Black's general plans) is basically good. 4 ♕b3 has also done well, and was White's most popular choice in the mid-1990s. After 4...♖b8, White can continue 5 h3 or 5 g3 without allowing a doubling of his f-pawns. However, the placing of the queen on f3 looks a bit artificial. Black tends to get active play to compensate for the bishop-pair by playing ...c5.

The move 4 e4 is very logical, as it occupies the centre immediately. The drawback is the slight weakness of White's d4-pawn, which the new idea 4...♗xf3!? 5 ♕xf3 g6 seeks to exploit.

Variation	Games	W's score	W's rating	W's Performance
4 ♘c3	179	53%	2432	2457
4 ♕b3	126	61%	2429	2508
4 e4	113	54%	2445	2475
4 g3	54	54%	2417	2451
4 d5	35	64%	2460	2520

This may be the reason why 4 e4 has been much less in popular recent years than it was at the beginning of the 1990s. However, there are still too few examples of 4...♗xf3!? to claim that it is really better than the traditional 4...e5.

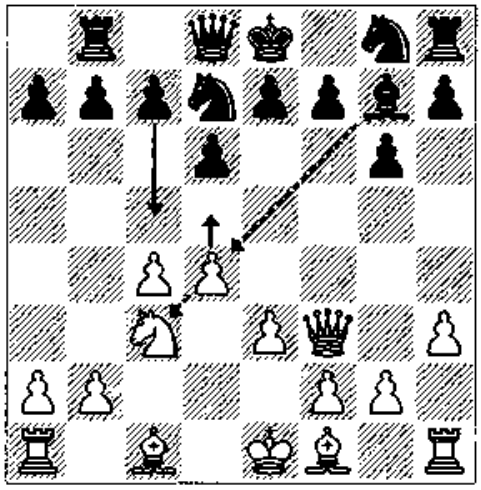
During the last few years, White's most popular choice has been 4 ♘c3 e5 (4...♗xf3!?) 5 g3!, which is a very solid option that scores quite well in practice. The point is that after 5...♗xf3 Black has already played the move ...e5, which doesn't seem to fit in very well with the exchange on f3. Black has tried several systems after this but none of them looks good enough to equalize fully or even give unclear counterchances. It is quite difficult to play for a win with Black except perhaps with 4...♗xf3. At the moment the ball is in Black's court to find something inspiring. The more innocent option 5 e3 leads to slow play typical of the Old Indian, and this weakens White's statistics with 4 ♘c3.

Black's plans and some important position-types

Depending on White's choice, Black generally has three standard plans.

1) Black fianchettoes his king's bishop, pressing against the d4-pawn, and strikes with ...c5. Usually Black gets some sort of counterplay on the queenside later on. Black may achieve the ...b5 advance in a Benoni type of position or sometimes the c4-pawn becomes weak if White hasn't answered with d5.

B

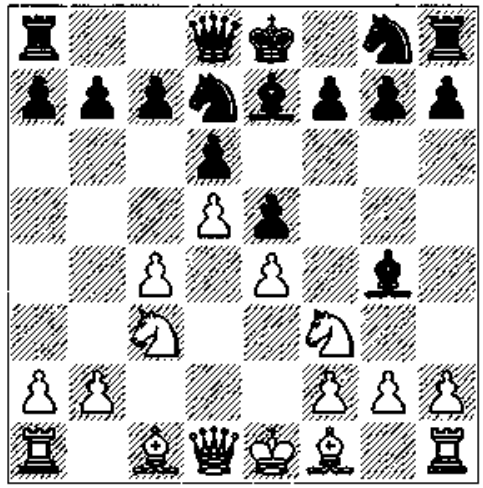


In this position, which arises after 4 ♕b3 ♖b8 5 h3 ♗xf3 6 ♕xf3 g6 7 ♘c3 ♗g7 8 e3, the first reaction at top level was 8...e5 but after Naumkin got very good play on the light squares against Hodgson (Cappelle la Grande 1992) with 9 d5 f5 10 e4 ♘e7 11 g4!, the move 8...c5! became accepted. After the obvious 9 d5 the controversial question is whether Black should play 9...♗xc3+!? Sometimes this exchange is the best idea in positions of this type, but here it is not necessary as Black gets a comfortable position with normal moves like ...♘gf6, ...a6 and ...e6 (see Line C2). Nevertheless, the idea of saddling White with doubled pawns at the cost of the strong bishop is important in this line. After the exchange White has an inflexible structure and two passive bishops. However, White might later achieve a central breakthrough to activate the bishops, get pressure on the b-file or manage to eliminate all Black's chances.

2) Black develops in a natural way with ...e5 and ...♗e7. After that, Black

strives for the exchange of the dark-squared bishops.

B

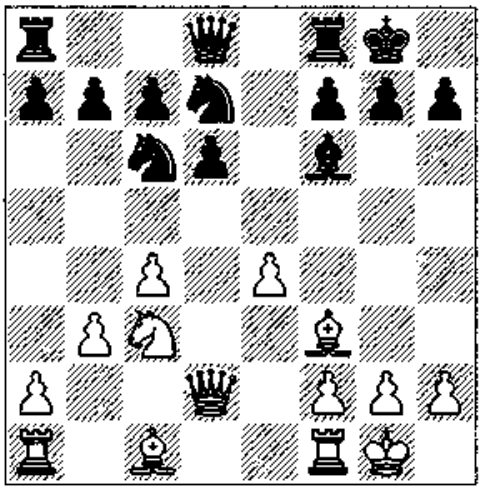


This position can arise from more than one line. White has probably given up the central tension prematurely by playing d5 and now Black happily continues 6...♗xf3! 7 ♕xf3 ♗g5, which looks positionally nice. Often Black has to do much more work to get rid of the passive dark-squared bishop. In Line D12 Black often attempts to exchange the bishops with the manoeuvre ...♗d8-b6 (see Khalifman-Gofshtein in note 'd2' to White's 8th move).

There is an important line 4 e4 e5 (Line B1) 5 ♗e2 ♗e7 6 ♘c3 ♗xf3 7 ♗xf3 and now instead of the logical 7...♗g5, which leads to trouble here, Black has 7...exd4!? 8 ♕xd4 ♗f6 9 ♕d2 ♘e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 b3 ♘c6 *(D)*.

Now it is obvious that in spite of White's slight space advantage Black has managed to stifle White's bishop-pair and even gets some counterplay with the plan ...♘c5 and ...a5-a4: 12 ♗b2 ♘c5 13 ♗d1 a5 14 ♖b1 a4 15 ♖e1 axb3 16 axb3 ♘b4 and now White

W



doesn't have anything better than 17 ♘d5 ♘xd5 (17...♗xb2!?) 18 exd5 ♗xb2 19 ♖xb2 ♕f6 with a comfortable position for Black, Jackelen-Hickl, Bundesliga 1992/3. This example shows another important idea: it is not always necessary to develop routinely with ...♘f6 and ...♗e7. Often the knight finds better options via e7. The counterplay with ...a5-a4 is also an important weapon to remember, as in many lines throughout the book.

3) Black exchanges on f3 and tries to stifle White's bishop-pair. Those position-types are introduced in the next chapter but there are some instances in this chapter in Line D2.

1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 c4 ♘d7

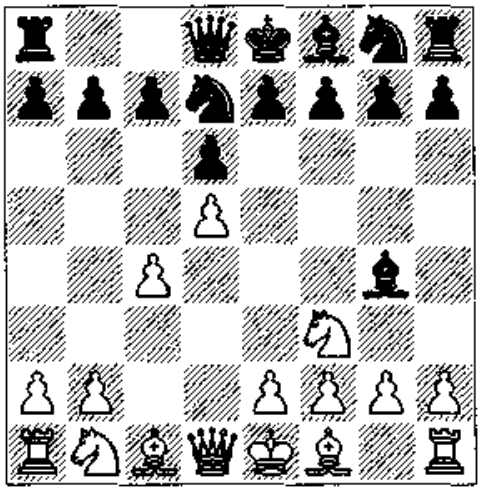
Now:

A:	**4 d5**	80
B:	**4 e4**	83
C:	**4 ♕b3**	89
D:	**4 ♘c3**	95

A)

4 d5 *(D)*

B



This move is often part of White's plans in this line, but here it doesn't stop Black playing ...e5.

4...e5

Or:

a) After 4...g6 5 ♘d4 ♘df6 the black knights look a bit clumsy, but in Kaunas-Fridman, Riga Z 1995 Black managed to equalize after 6 g3 ♗g7 7 ♗g2 ♕c8 8 ♘c3 (8 h3!?) 8...♗h3 9 ♕a4+ ♗d7 10 ♕a5 c5 11 dxc6 bxc6 12 0-0 ♘h6 13 e4 ♘hg4 14 ♘f3 ♗e6 15 e5 ♘xe5 16 ♘xe5 dxe5 17 ♕xe5 ♗xc4 18 ♖e1 0-0 19 ♕c5 ♗d5.

b) Hodgson has played the interesting alternative 4...a5!? a couple of times:

b1) 5 ♘c3 g6 6 ♘d4 ♘c5 7 f3 ♗d7 8 e4 e5 9 dxe6 fxe6 10 ♗e3 ♗h6 11 ♗f2 e5 12 ♘db5 ♘f6 13 ♘d5 ♘xd5 14 cxd5 0-0 15 ♘c3 a4 16 ♗e2 ♕g5 with counterplay, Baburin-Hodgson, Biel 1992.

b2) 5 ♘d4 ♘c5 (the knight likes to be here) 6 ♘c3 g6 7 g3 ♗g7 8 ♗g2 ♘f6 9 ♗e3 ♕c8!? 10 h3 ♗d7 11 g4 0-0 12 ♕c2 c6 (12...e5!? looks better) 13 ♖d1 e5 14 dxe6 ♗xe6 15 ♘xe6 ♕xe6 16 b3 ± Bates-Hodgson, British League (4NCL) 1997/8.

c) 4...♗xf3!? 5 exf3 g6 is a viable alternative: 6 ♗d3 (6 ♘c3 should be compared with the note to White's 5th move in Line C of Chapter 13) 6...♗g7 7 0-0 ♘gf6 8 ♖e1 0-0 9 ♘c3 ♘c5 (9...c6 10 ♗f1 ♘c5 11 ♗e3 ♘fd7 12 ♕d2 a5 13 h4! gave White a kingside attack in I.Sokolov-Van der Wiel, Dutch Ch (Rotterdam) 1998) 10 ♗c2 a5 11 f4 e6! 12 ♕f3 ♘fd7 13 ♗d2 ♘b6 14 b3 exd5 15 cxd5 f5 16 ♖ad1 ♕d7 17 ♗d3 ½-½ Baburin-Al.Panchenko, Germany 1992/3.

5 dxe6

5 ♘c3 ♗e7 6 e4 transposes to note 'b3' to White's 5th move in Line B1.

5...♗xe6

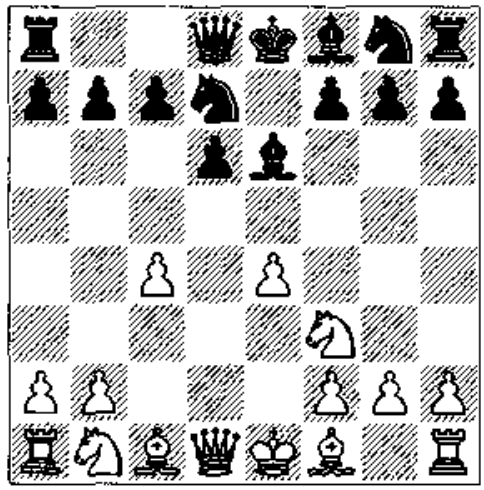
5...fxe6!? leads to a more difficult position-type; for example, 6 ♘d4 (Wojtkiewicz considers 6 g3! to be better) 6...♕e7 7 h3 (7 ♘c3 ♘gf6 8 f3 ♗h5 9 h4 ♗f7 10 g4 g6 is unclear, Edzgveradze-Jaracz, Mlada Boleslav 1994) 7...♗h5 8 ♘c3 c6 9 g4 ♗f7 10 ♗g2 ♕d8 11 ♘e4?! h6 12 g5 d5 13 g6 dxe4 14 gxf7+ ♔xf7 15 ♗xe4 ♘gf6 16 ♗c2 ♘e5 ∓ Radzievicz-Minasian, Cappelle la Grande 1999.

6 e4 *(D)*

6...♗g4

It seems exchanging the bishop is a good idea in this type of position where Black has less space. Otherwise:

a) Black tends to drift into a passive position after 6...♘c5?! 7 ♘c3 ♘f6 8 ♕c2 g6 (8...a5 9 ♘d4 ±; 8...♗e7 9 ♘d4 0-0 10 ♗e2 c6 11 0-0 a5 12 ♗e3 ♕c7 13 ♖ac1 ♖ad8 14 h3 ♗c8 15 a3 g6 16 b4 axb4 17 axb4 ♘e6 18 ♘b3 ±



Shabalov-Sokolovs, Cappelle la Grande 1995) 9 ♗e2 ♗g7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♘d4 ♗d7 12 ♖d1 ♖e8 13 f3 ♘h5 14 ♗f1 c6 15 ♕f2 ♕e7 16 g4 ♘f6 17 ♗f4 b6 18 b4 ♘b7 19 b5 ± Wojtkiewicz-Adams, New York Open 1995.

b) After the alternative move-order 6...♘gf6 7 ♘c3 ♗g4 White has tried 8 ♗e3 (8 ♗e2 transposes to the main line) 8...g6 9 ♕b3!? ♕c8 10 ♘d4 ♗g7 11 f3 ♘c5 12 ♕c2 ♗d7 with equality, Radziewicz-Werner, Tallinn girls Ech 1997.

7 ♗e2 ♘gf6 8 ♘c3 g6

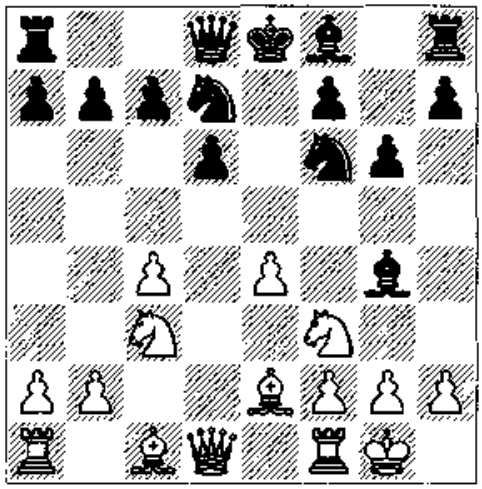
Black was suffering in a passive position after 8...♗xf3?! 9 ♗xf3 c6 10 0-0 ♗e7 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 ♗e3 ♖e8 13 f3 a5 14 ♔h1 ♗f8 15 ♕d2 ♕c7 16 ♖fd1 ♘c5 17 ♖ab1 ♖e6 18 b3 ± in D.Gurevich-Bezold, Bermuda 1998.

9 0-0 *(D)*

Or:

a) The most natural line is 9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♗xf3 ♗g7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖e1 ♖e8 13 ♗d2 (13 ♗g5 transposes to the main line) 13...c6 14 ♕c2 a6 15 ♖ad1 b5 16 ♗f4 ♘e5 17 ♗e2 ♕b8 18 a3 ♖a7 = Schmidt-Jansa, 2nd Bundesliga 1993/4. White's bishop-pair is not too active.

b) 9 ♘d4 ♗xe2 10 ♕xe2 ♗g7 11 ♗e3 0-0 12 0-0 c6 13 ♕d2 ½-½ Wojtkiewicz-Benjamin, Philadelphia 1995. Here Black could soon play ...d5 (for example, 13...♖e8 14 f3 ♘e5 15 b3 d5), or opt for ...a6 followed by ...b5.



9...♗g7 10 ♗g5

After 10 ♗e3 0-0 11 ♘d4 (11 h3) 11...♗xe2 12 ♕xe2 ♖e8 13 f3 Black can obtain good chances with a plan familiar from the King's Indian: 13...c6 14 ♖ad1 a6 15 ♕d2 ♘e5 16 b3 b5 ∓ Mozetić-Damljanović, Belgrade 1993.

10...0-0 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 h6 14 ♗e3 ♘h7!

14...♘e5?! 15 ♗e2 ♘fd7 16 ♕d2 ♔h7 17 f4 was very good for White in Lalić-Fernando, Dos Hermanas 1998.

15 g3 ♘e5 16 ♗e2 ♕d7 17 f4 ♘c6 18 ♗g4 ♕d8 19 ♗f3 g5!

Black gets some counterplay thanks to White's somewhat vulnerable kingside.

20 ♗f2 ♔h8 21 ♔h1 gxf4 22 gxf4 ♕f6 23 ♘e2?! ♘g5! 24 ♗h4 ♕e6

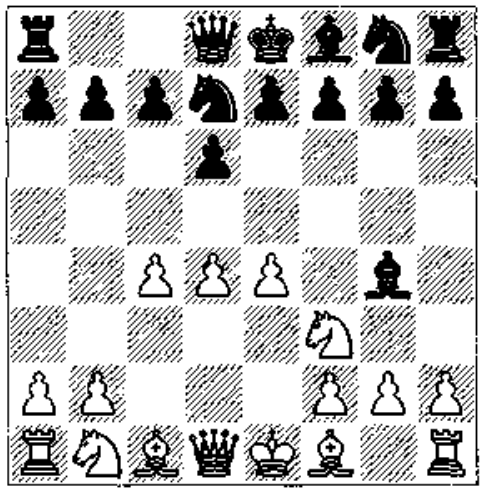
∓ Christiansen-Benjamin, USA Ch (Parsippany) 1996.

Conclusion: Although this line has been quite good for White in practice, it seems theoretically quite innocent. Even the 4th move alternatives look perfectly playable.

B)

4 e4 *(D)*

B



An active and quite important move. Black has allowed White to occupy the centre, so why not do so?

Now:

B1: 4...e5 83
B2: 4...♗xf3!? 87

B1)

4...e5 5 ♗e2

This is the most natural move but White has two primary alternatives:

a) 5 ♗e3 ♗e7 (our suggestion is 5...exd4!? 6 ♗xd4 ♘e7 7 ♗e2 ♘c6 =) 6 ♘c3 ♗xf3 7 ♕xf3 ♗g5 8 g3 ♗xe3 9 ♕xe3 ♘e7 10 d5 0-0 11 0-0-0 f5 12 f3 a5 13 ♗h3 f4 14 gxf4? (White should not give Black the e5-square; 14 ♕f2! ♘c5 ±) 14...exf4 15 ♕e2 ♘g6 16 ♗e6+ ♔h8 17 h4 ♘c5 18 h5 ♘e5 is unclear, Zilberman-Agrest, USSR Cht (Azov) 1991.

b) Closing the centre immediately with 5 d5 is an important line but probably not so dangerous for Black:

b1) The appealing 5..f5?! is a bit risky: 6 ♗e2 ♘c5 (6..fxe4 7 ♘g5) 7 ♘g5?! (Gershon gives 7 exf5 e4 8 ♘d4 ♘d3+ 9 ♔f1 ♗xe2+, when 10 ♕xe2! looks very strong) 7...♗e7! 8 ♗xg4 ♗xg5 9 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 10 exf5 ♘f6 11 ♗h3 ♕h4 12 0-0! (12 ♕c2 ♘fe4 13 0-0 ♘g5 ∓) 12...♕xc4 13 ♘c3 0-0 14 g3 ♖f7 with a complicated position, Gershon-Azmaiparashvili, Saint Vincent Ech 2000.

b2) 5...♘gf6 6 ♘c3 ♘c5 7 ♕e2 (or 7 h3 ♗h5 8 ♕e2) 7...a5 8 h3 ♗h5 (8....♗d7 is possible) 9 g3 ♗e7 10 ♗g2 c6 11 0-0 and then:

b21) 11...0-0 12 g4! ♗g6 13 ♘h4 ♗xe4 14 ♘xe4 ♘fxe4 15 dxc6! bxc6 16 ♘f5 d5 17 ♖d1 ♖e8 18 ♗e3 gave White more than sufficient compensation in Lukacs-Hodgson, Lisbon 1988.

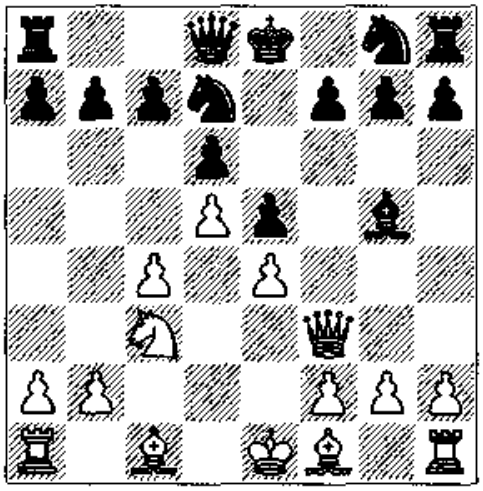
b22) 11...cxd5! is more accurate, as Hodgson later showed: 12 cxd5 0-0 13 ♖e1 a4 14 ♕f1 ♕a5?! (14...♘fd7 =) 15 ♗d2 ♕a6 16 ♘h4 ♖fc8 17 ♘f5 ± Illescas-Hodgson, Wijk aan Zee 1993.

b3) 5...♗e7 (the most logical) 6 ♘c3 ♗xf3! 7 ♕xf3 ♗g5 *(D)*.

Black achieves the desired exchange of his bad dark-squared bishop. In this seemingly level position White has tried:

b31) 8 ♗d3 ♘h6!? (8...♗xc1 9 ♖xc1 ♘e7 brings the knight to a more

W



natural square) 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♕h3 ♗xc1 11 ♖axc1 a5 12 ♘a4 ♕e7 13 ♖fe1 ♔h8 14 ♖c3 b6 15 ♗c2 ♘c5 16 ♘xc5 bxc5 17 ♖a3 ♖fb8 18 ♕c3 ♖b4 19 ♗a4 ± Lobron-Hickl, Nussloch 1996.

b32) 8 ♕g3 ♗xc1 9 ♖xc1 g6 10 ♗e2 ♘gf6 11 0-0 0-0 12 f4 exf4 13 ♖xf4 c6 14 b3 ♕e7 = brought White nothing in Douven-Lalić, Groningen 1991.

b33) 8 g3 ♗xc1 9 ♖xc1 ♘e7 10 ♗h3 a5 = 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♕e3 ♘g6 13 ♖c2 b6 14 f3 ♕e7 15 ♖cf2, Sorokin-Torre, Elista OL 1998. White has more space but there are no weaknesses in Black's camp.

b34) 8 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 and now:

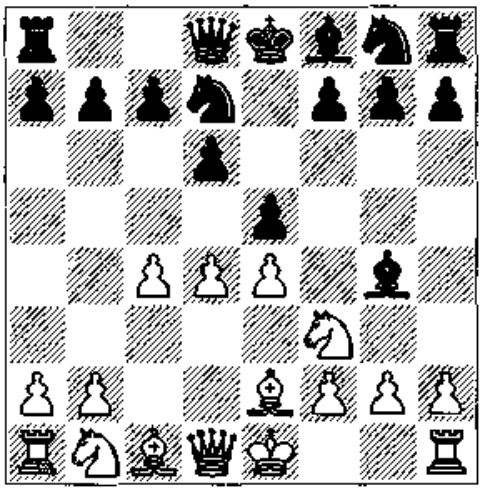
b341) 9 ♘b5 ♕d8 seems to achieve nothing for White.

b342) The peaceful 9 g3 ♕e7 10 ♗g2 ♘gf6 11 0-0 c6 12 ♖ac1 0-0 13 ♗h3 a5 14 ♕e2 ♘c5 is level, Jackelen-Maiwald, Bundesliga 1994/5.

b343) 9 c5!? ♘xc5 10 ♗b5+ ♔e7 (10...♔f8!? 11 b4 ♘a6) 11 b4 a6 12 bxc5 axb5 13 ♘xb5 ♘f6 14 0-0 dxc5 (14...♖hc8!? is unclear) 15 ♘xc7 ♖ac8 16 ♘b5 ± was a very interesting piece of activity in d'Amore-Albano, Perugia 1991.

We now return to 5 ♗e2 *(D)*:

B



5...♗e7

For some reason the following system has not been repeated even though it doesn't look very illogical: 5...♗xf3 6 ♗xf3 exd4 7 ♕xd4 ♘e7 8 ♗e3 ♘c6 9 ♕d2 g6 10 ♘c3 ♗g7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♗e2 ♘c5 13 f3 ♘e6 14 ♖ac1 ♔h8 (it is hard to say if this is useful; at this point the position looks quite level) 15 ♗d3 ♘cd4 16 f4 f5 17 exf5 gxf5 18 ♕f2 ♕f6 ± Wl.Schmidt-Yrjölä, Thessaloniki OL 1988.

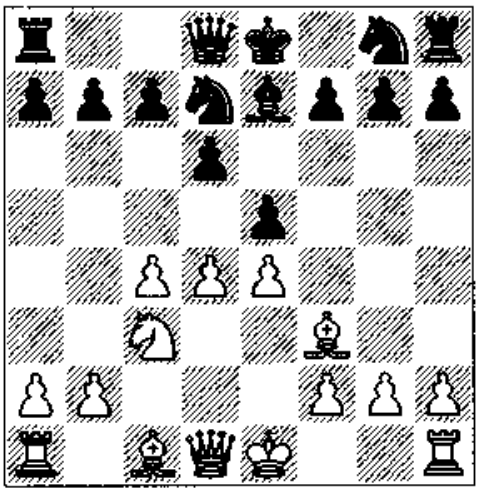
6 ♘c3

6 ♘g1!? is an interesting idea of Gleizerov's. 6...♗xe2 7 ♘xe2 ♘gf6 (7...exd4 8 ♘xd4 ♗f6 9 ♘c3 ♘e7 10 0-0, Tjomsland-Salmensuu, Rimavska Sobota 1996, 10...0-0 11 ♗e3 ♖e8 appears pretty solid) 8 ♘bc3 0-0 9 0-0 ♖e8 10 ♘g3 ♗f8 11 ♗e3 c6 12 d5 g6 13 f3 h5 14 ♕d2 ♘h7 15 dxc6 bxc6 16 b4 ♘b6 17 ♕d3 gave White a tiny space advantage in Gleizerov-Vezzosi, Saint Vincent 2001.

6...♗xf3

6...♘gf6 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♗e3 ± leads to a well-known Old Indian line where White is a move ahead compared with the note to White's 8th move in Line D12.

7 ♗xf3 *(D)*



7...♗g5

After Hickl's interesting continuation 7...exd4!? 8 ♕xd4 ♗f6 there is no evidence that White really gets anything concrete, in spite of his bishop-pair:

a) 9 ♕e3 ♘e7 10 ♘d5 ♘xd5 11 cxd5 (11 exd5+!?) 11...0-0 12 0-0 a5 13 ♖b1 ♖e8 14 g3 c6 15 dxc6 bxc6 16 ♕a3 ♕c7 17 ♗f4 ♗e5 = Ružele-Hickl, Berlin 1997.

b) 9 ♕d2 ♘e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 b3 ♘c6 (11...♘c5 12 ♗b2 a5 13 ♖fe1 ♖e8 14 ♗e2 ♘c6 15 f3 ♗g5!? 16 f4 ♗f6 17 ♗d1 a4 18 ♖b1 axb3 19 axb3 ♘b4 ∓ Rey-Hodgson, San Francisco 1998) 12 ♗b2 ♘c5 13 ♗d1 a5 14 ♖b1 a4 15 ♖e1 axb3 16 axb3 ♘b4 17 ♘d5 ♘xd5 (17...♗xb2!?) 18 exd5 ♗xb2 19 ♖xb2 ♕f6 = Jackelen-Hickl, Bundesliga 1992/3. The bishop-pair tends to remain inactive or else it is devalued by the exchange of dark-squared bishops. From these examples this idea looks more attractive for Black than the main line, but further tests are needed.

8 ♗xg5

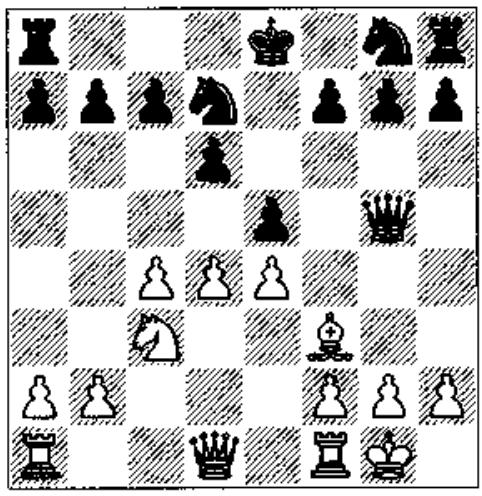
Less ambitious is 8 0-0 ♗xc1 9 ♖xc1 ♘gf6 (9...♘e7!?):

a) 10 d5 0-0 11 b4 ♕e7 (11...a5!? =) 12 ♕d2 g6 13 a3 ♖fc8 14 ♖fd1 ♔g7 15 ♕d3 h5 16 ♖d2 ♘e8 17 ♗d1 ♘b6 18 ♗b3 ♘f6 19 ♘d1 ♘bd7 20 ♖dc2 c5 21 dxc6 bxc6 22 ♖d2 ½-½ Ionov-Belikov, Orel 1992.

b) 10 g3 0-0 11 ♗g2 ♖e8 12 ♕d2 c6 13 ♖cd1 a6 14 d5 ♖c8 15 b3 cxd5 16 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 17 cxd5 a5 ½-½ Vukić-Mokry, Graz 1991.

c) 10 ♕d2 0-0 11 ♗e2 ♖e8 12 d5 ♘c5 13 ♕e3 a5 14 b3 c6! 15 ♖b1 ♕b6 16 a3 ♖ec8 17 ♖fc1 ♘cd7! = Vyzhmanavin-Miles, Beijing 1991.

8...♕xg5 9 0-0 *(D)*



White has more space and better development. Practice has shown Black cannot completely equalize.

9...♕d8

Or:

a) Black has suffered even more in the line 9...c6?! 10 d5! c5 11 ♕b3 ♘b6 12 a4 ♕e7 13 a5 ♘c8 14 a6 ♖b8:

a1) 15 ♕b5+!? ♔f8 (15...♕d7? 16 ♕xd7+ ♔xd7 17 ♗g4+ ♔d8 18 ♗xc8 ♔xc8 19 ♘b5 +−) 16 axb7 ♖xb7 17 ♕c6 ±.

a2) 15 ♗g4 ♘b6 16 axb7 ♖xb7 17 ♖xa7! ♘f6 (17...♖xa7 18 ♕xb6 ♕c7 19 ♕xc7 ♖xc7 20 ♘b5 ♖e7 21 ♖a1! +−) 18 ♕b5+ ♔f8 19 ♖xb7 ♕xb7 (J.Horvath-Ruck, Budapest 1995) 20 b4! +− Ribli.

b) 9...♘h6 10 b4! 0-0 11 dxe5 ♘xe5 12 ♗e2 ♘eg4 13 ♕d5 ♕f6 14 ♕d2 ± a5?! 15 ♘d5 ♕d8 16 bxa5 ♖a7 17 ♖ab1 c6 18 ♘b6 ± Stohl-Miles, Manila IZ 1990.

10 dxe5!

10 ♖c1 transposes to the note to White's 8th move.

10...dxe5

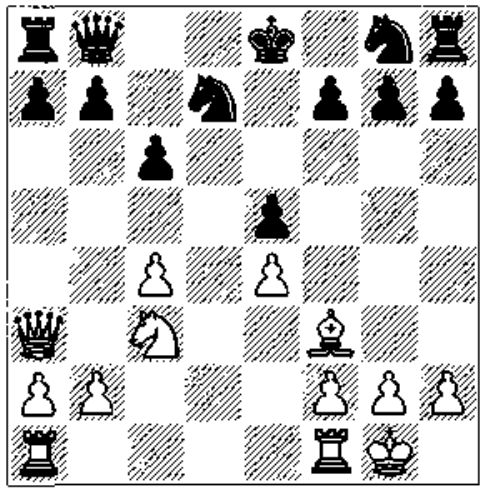
Kramnik's suggestion 10...♘xe5 11 ♗e2 ♘e7 12 f4 ± doesn't look very attractive for Black either. Where are the counterchances?

11 ♕b3 ♕b8

11...♕c8 is about the same: 12 ♗g4! (12 ♖ad1 ♘gf6 13 ♕a3 c6 14 ♖d2 ♕c7 15 ♖fd1 ♘f8 16 ♕a4 ♘8d7 17 ♕a3 ♘f8 ½-½ Piket-Adams, Groningen 1990) 12...♘gf6 13 ♗xd7+ (13 ♗f5!?) 13...♘xd7 14 ♕a3 c6 15 ♖ad1 ♕c7 16 ♖d6 0-0 17 ♖fd1 ♘f6 18 ♕c5 ♕b6 19 ♕xb6 axb6 20 f3 and White is much better, Khuzman-Dunnington, Cannes 1992.

12 ♕a3 c6 *(D)*

13 ♗g4!



An important move. Less convincing is 13 ♖ad1 ♘gf6 14 ♖d2 ♘f8 with counterplay.

13...♘gf6

After 13...♘df6 14 ♗h3 ♘e7 15 ♖ad1 ♕c7 16 ♖d6 (another idea is 16 ♕c5!?, threatening both 17 ♘b5 and 17 ♘d5) 16...0-0 17 ♖fd1 ± White dominates the d-file.

14 ♗h3

Black's position is not quite as difficult after 14 ♗xd7+?! ♘xd7 15 ♖ad1 ♕c7 ± but 14 ♗f5!? should not be worse than the text-move.

14...♕d8

14...♕c7 15 ♖ad1 ♘f8 16 ♕c5! ♕e7 17 ♖d6 ± offers Black no relief.

15 ♖ad1 ♕e7 16 ♖d6 ♘f8

In the variation 16...0-0 17 ♖xd7 ♕xa3 18 bxa3 ♘xd7 19 ♗xd7 ♖fd8 20 ♖d1 ± White gains material and after 16...♘b6 17 c5! ♘c4 18 ♕b4 ♘xd6 19 cxd6 a5 (19...♕d8 20 d7+! ♘xd7 21 ♖d1 +−) 20 ♕a3!? (20 ♕c5 ♘d7 21 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 22 ♘a4! with good compensation) 20...♕f8 21 ♖d1 ± White has superb compensation, and should probably win.

17 ♕c5 ♘8d7

17...♘g6? 18 ♖xc6 +–.

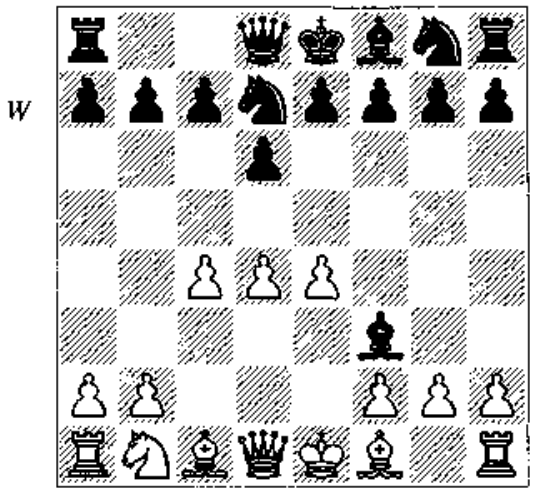
18 ♕a3 ♘f8 19 ♖fd1 ♘g6 20 g3

White makes the g6-knight an unhappy piece and secures a big plus. In Kramnik-Mokry, Bundesliga 1994/5, White realized his advantage convincingly: 20...0-0 21 c5 ♖fe8 22 b4 a5!? 23 b5! cxb5 24 ♘xb5! (there is no need to allow counterplay by 24 ♘d5 ♘xd5 25 exd5 e4!) 24...♘xe4 25 ♕e3 ♘f6 26 ♖b6 ♖ed8?! (after 26...e4 27 ♘d6 ♖eb8 28 ♗g2!? ♘e5 29 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 30 ♕xe4 ± White dominates the board) 27 ♘d6 ♘e8 28 ♕b3! +– ♖a7?! 29 ♘c8 ♖xc8 30 ♗xc8 ♕xc5 31 ♖d8 ♕e7 32 ♖d7 1-0.

Conclusion: The main line is unpleasant for Black, who has to opt for either the less tested alternative on the 7th move or choose Line B2.

B2)

4...♗xf3!? *(D)*



This is a slightly surprising and comparatively new idea. Black wants to benefit from the weakness of the d4-pawn and plans to play ...c5 later instead of ...e5.

5 ♕xf3

5 gxf3 e5 6 ♘c3 is untested but maybe not as stupid as it looks.

5...g6 6 ♘c3

Or:

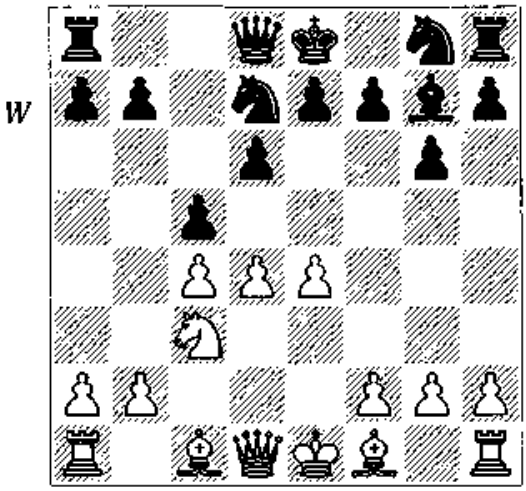
a) 6 ♕d1 ♗g7 7 ♘c3 c5 8 ♗e3 transposes to the note to White's 8th move.

b) 6 ♕b3 can hardly be any good if White has no time to take on b7: 6...♗g7 7 ♗e3 ♘h6!? 8 h3 (8 ♕xb7 ♘g4 looks risky for White) 8...f5 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 g3 c5 11 d5 fxe4 12 g4 ♕a5 13 ♗g2 ♗d4 14 0-0 ♗xe3 15 fxe3 ♕a6 16 ♗xe4 ♘f7 17 ♕c2 ♘de5 18 b3 ♘g5 19 ♗g2 ♕a5 = Kožul-Adams, Pula Echt 1997.

6...♗g7 7 ♕d1

Or 7 ♗e3 c5.

7...c5! *(D)*



8 d5

This should be critical since White can hardly hope for anything with 8 ♗e3 ♕b6 (8...cxd4 9 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 10

♕xd4 ♘gf6 = is an even simpler route to equality) 9 ♘a4 (9 ♘d5 ♕a5+ 10 ♗d2 ♕d8 =) 9...♕a5+ 10 ♗d2 ♕a6 11 d5 ♘gf6 12 ♘c3 0-0 13 ♗e2 e6 14 0-0 exd5 15 exd5 (15 cxd5 is met by 15...c4) 15...♖ae8 16 ♕c2 ♖e7 17 ♖fe1 ♖fe8 18 ♗f1 ♘e5 = Khuzman-Benjamin, Erevan OL 1996.

8...♗xc3+!

Without this idea there is not much point in Black's play. After 8...♘gf6 Black would most likely drift into a position without a plan.

9 bxc3 ♘gf6

9...♕a5 10 ♕c2 ♘gf6 11 ♖b1! ± isn't entirely comfortable for Black. 11...0-0-0 12 ♗e2 ♔b8 (another plan typical for these positions is 12...♘b6 intending ...♕a4) 13 0-0 h6 14 f4 ♔a8 15 ♗e3 ♖hg8 16 e5! (otherwise Black would play ...g5 and be fine) 16...dxe5 17 fxe5 ♘xe5 18 ♖b5 ♕a6 19 ♖xc5?! (19 ♗xc5 ±) 19...♘eg4 20 ♗d4 e5 21 dxe6 ♕xe6 with a complicated position, Bareev-Gulko, Cannes 2001.

10 f3

After 10 ♕c2!?, 10...♕a5 transposes to the previous note. Time will tell if there is anything better.

10...♕a5 11 ♕b3

11 ♕c2!? is still the alternative.

11...0-0-0 *(D)*

12 ♗e2

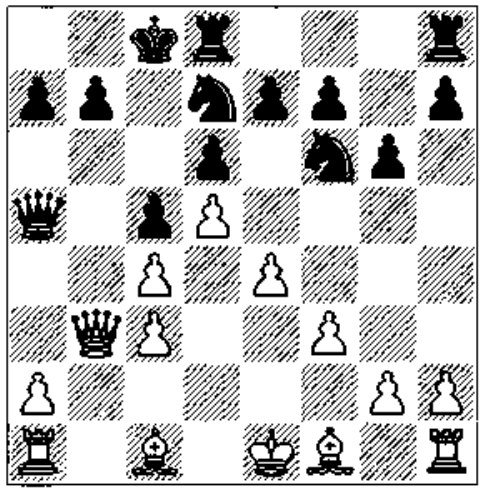
This is a complex position where White can also try:

a) 12 ♔f2!? h6 13 h4 and it is not easy to achieve ...g5.

b) 12 ♗d2 (intending 0-0-0) is possible, but it should not worry Black.

c) 12 ♖b1 ♕c7 13 ♗d3 ♖dg8 14 f4 (14 h4!?) 14...h6 15 0-0 g5 = and now

W



16 e5?! dxe5 17 fxe5 ♘xe5 18 d6? exd6 doesn't work for White.

12...♖dg8!

Now Black will achieve the ...g5 advance, ensuring him a fair share of the play.

13 ♖b1 ♕c7 14 ♗e3

14 h4 ♘h5! 15 ♔f2 f5 gives Black good play.

14...♔b8 15 ♕c2

Threatening f4.

15...g5 16 0-0 ♖g6 17 ♖b2 ♔a8 18 ♖fb1 ♖b8!

This is better than the weakening 18...b6 19 ♗d1, when White can continue with ♕e2 and ♗a4-c6.

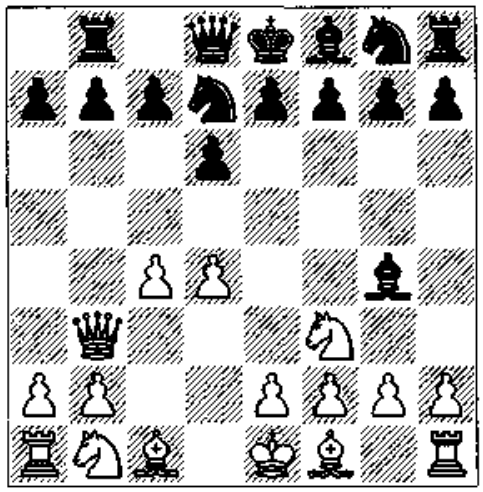
Following the text-move (18...♖b8), Black is a little better. Topalov-Adams, Dortmund 1996 continued: 19 ♔h1 h5 20 ♕d2? (better is 20 ♖b5 with a more unclear position) 20...g4 21 ♕c2 gxf3 22 gxf3 ♘e5 23 f4 ♕c8! 24 ♗f1? (equally losing is 24 fxe5? ♕h3 25 ♖g1 {25 ♗f1 ♕xe3} 25...♖bg8 26 ♖bb1 ♕xe3 27 ♖xg6 ♖xg6 28 exf6 ♕f2 −+ but White should play 24 f5 ♖g7 25 ♗h6 ♖g8 26 ♗f4 ♘ed7 ∓) 24...♘xc4! −+ 25 ♗xc4 ♕h3 26 ♖f1 ♕xe3 27

♕d3 ♕xe4+ 28 ♕xe4 ♘xe4 and Black won.

Conclusion: This new but not so original idea has frightened White away from 4 e4 even though it is not absolutely clear that Black can equalize. In fact it seems that in these complicated positions White has somewhat better chances. Still, more tests are needed.

C)

4 ♕b3 ♖b8 *(D)*



Now:

C1: 5 g3	89
C2: 5 h3	92

White also has the following less popular possibilities:

a) 5 ♘c3 is a serious move (and has something in common with 4 ♘c3):

a1) 5...a6!? 6 e4 ♗xf3 7 gxf3 e6 (7...e5!? deserves attention) 8 ♗e3 c5 9 dxc5 ♘xc5 10 ♕c2 ♘f6 11 ♖g1 ♕a5 12 0-0-0 g6 13 ♔b1 ♗e7 14 ♕d2 is slightly better for White, Epishin-Bezold, Bad Wiessee 1997.

a2) 5...g6 (very logical if Black doesn't have to worry about the position of the g4-bishop) 6 ♗g5!? (6 ♘d2 e5) 6...♗g7 7 e3 ♗xf3 8 gxf3 c6 9 ♗e2 ♕a5 10 f4 ♘gf6 (10...c5!?) 11 0-0-0 c5 12 dxc5 ♘xc5 13 ♕b5+ ♕xb5 14 ♘xb5 ♘fe4 15 ♗h4 a6 16 ♘d4 ♔d7 = Ortiz-Torre, Manila 1997.

a3) After 5...♗xf3 6 exf3 g6 7 ♗e3 ♗g7 8 ♖d1 Black can hardly be happy with 8...e6?! 9 d5, so he has continued 8...c6 9 ♗e2 ♘gf6 10 0-0 0-0 11 f4 a6 12 d5 ♕a5 13 f5 (13 dxc6! bxc6 14 ♕c2 is slightly better for White according to Benjamin, though it would be very hard to prove any meaningful plus) 13...♘c5 14 ♕c2 cxd5 15 cxd5 ♖fc8 16 ♕b1 ♘a4 17 ♘xa4 ♕xa4 with an equal position, Miles-Benjamin, Horgen 1994.

b) Less natural is 5 ♗e3 c6:

b1) 6 ♘c3 ♘gf6 (here is an unusual way to lose: 6...b5?! 7 cxb5 cxb5 8 ♘g5! ♗h5 9 g4 ♗g6 10 h4 h6?? 11 h5 1-0 Matveeva-Guseinov, Russia Cup 1999) 7 ♘d2 ♕a5 8 d5 (8 f3 ♗e6 9 ♗f2 b5 is unclear) 8...e5 (8...♘b6!?) 9 f3 ♗f5 10 ♗f2 e4 11 g4 ♗g6 12 g5 ♘h5 13 ♗h3 (Bareev-Adams, Biel 1991) and now 13...♘e5! is unclear according to Bareev.

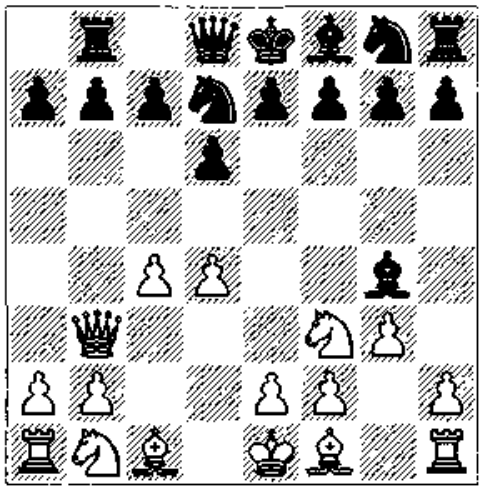
b2) 6 ♘bd2 ♕a5! 7 h3 ♗xf3 8 exf3 ♘gf6 9 ♗e2 e6 = 10 0-0 ♗e7 11 ♖fd1 0-0 12 ♖ac1 ♕c7 13 ♘e4?! d5 14 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 15 c5 ♘h5 and now Black has a slight advantage, M.Gurevich-Seul, Bonn 1996.

C1)

5 g3 *(D)*

5...g6

B



This is the most natural plan, striving for the ...c5 thrust, but there are other moves Black has tried:

a) 5...e5?! 6 ♗g2 and then:

a1) 6...♗xf3 7 ♕xf3 ♘gf6 (7...exd4 8 ♕e4+ ♗e7 9 ♕xd4 ±) 8 e3 d5? (8...e4 9 ♕d1 c6 10 ♘c3 d5 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 ♕a4 a6 13 f3 ± Dokhoian) 9 cxd5 ♗b4+ 10 ♘c3 e4 (10...exd4 11 exd4 0-0 12 0-0 ♘b6 13 ♗g5 ±) 11 ♕e2 0-0 (Dokhoian-Hodgson, Wijk aan Zee 1989) 12 0-0 ± intending to meet 12...♗xc3 with 13 bxc3 ♘xd5 14 ♗xe4 ♘xc3 15 ♗xh7+.

a2) 6...♘gf6 7 ♗e3 exd4 8 ♘xd4 c5 9 ♘f3 a6 10 a4 b5 11 axb5 axb5 12 cxb5 ♗e7 13 ♘c3 0-0 14 0-0 ♘b6 15 ♖fd1 ♗e6 16 ♕c2 ♘bd5 17 ♗g5 ♘xc3 18 bxc3 ♖xb5 ± Ružele-Kveinys, Bonn 1996.

b) 5...♘gf6 6 ♗g2 c6 7 ♗e3 e5 8 ♘c3 ♕a5 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 a3 (alternatively, 10 ♖fd1 ± Salov-Adams, Manila IZ 1990) 10...♕a6 11 ♕a2 0-0 12 b4 ♖fc8 13 ♖fc1 ± Antunes-Urday, Matanzas Capablanca mem 1994.

c) An interesting Benko-style continuation is 5...c5!? 6 d5 b5!? (6...g6) 7 cxb5 a6 8 a4 axb5 9 axb5 ♘gf6 10 ♘c3 g6 11 ♗g2 (11 h3!? ♗xf3 12 exf3) 11...♗g7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♘d2 ♘b6 14 h3 ♗d7 15 ♘db1!? (15 ♘c4 ♘xc4 16 ♕xc4 ♘e8 with good compensation) 15...♘e8 16 e4 ♘c7 17 ♘a3 ♕c8 18 ♔h2 ♕b7 19 f4 ♘c8 20 e5 ♗xb5 = A.Marić-Cherniaev, Biel 1994.

6 ♗g2

Some sources recommend 6 ♘bd2 but Black gets similar counterplay as in the main line after 6...c5!. White then has three options:

a) Black activates his pieces after 7 dxc5?! ♘xc5 8 ♕c3 ♘f6 9 b4 ♗g7! 10 ♕a3 ♘ce4 (10...♘cd7!? is unclear) 11 ♗b2 ♗xf3! 12 ♘xf3 0-0 13 ♗g2 ♕c7 (13...a5!? 14 bxa5 ♖a8 offers Black a slight advantage) 14 ♖c1 ♗h6 (14...a5!?) 15 e3 ♘g4 16 h3!? (16 0-0 ♘exf2 17 ♖xf2? ♗xe3 ∓) 16...♘gxf2 (16...♘exf2 17 hxg4 ♘xh1 18 ♕c3 followed by ♗xh1 ±) 17 0-0 a5 18 ♖xf2 axb4 19 ♕d3! (19 ♕b3? ♘c5! 20 ♕xb4 ♗xe3 ∓) 19...♘xf2 20 ♔xf2 with a very complicated position, Lautier-Adams, Manila IZ 1990.

b) 7 e3 ♕a5!? (7...♗g7 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♘xf3 transposes to 'c2') 8 ♗g2 ♗xf3 9 ♗xf3 ♗g7 10 ♕d3 ♘gf6 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♗g2 b5! 13 b3 bxc4 14 ♘xc4 ♕b5 = was quite comfortable for Black in H.Olafsson-Kosten, Hastings 1990/1.

c) 7 h3!? ♗xf3 8 ♘xf3 ♗g7 (the alternative 8...cxd4!? 9 ♘xd4 ♗g7 is also worth considering) and now:

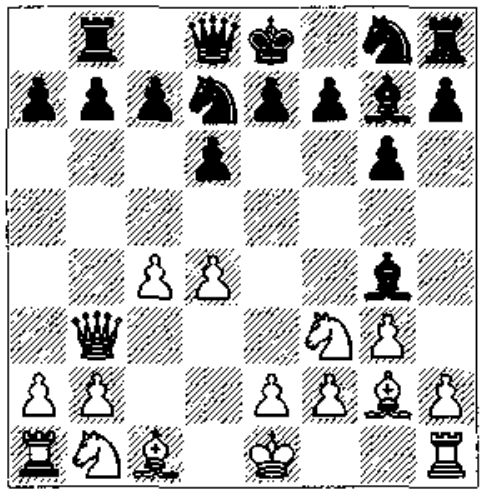
c1) After 9 dxc5 ♘xc5 10 ♕a3 b5!? (10...a5) 11 cxb5 ♖xb5 Black once again becomes active.

c2) 9 e3 allows two promising options:

c21) 9...a6!? 10 ♗g2 (another approach for White is 10 a4 ♘gf6 11 ♗e2) 10...♘gf6 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♕c2 ♕c7 13 b3 ♖fc8 14 ♕e2 b5 15 cxb5 axb5 16 ♗b2 c4 17 ♖fc1 d5 ∓ Brückner-Bezold, Bundesliga 1989/90.

c22) 9...♘gf6 10 ♗e2!? (here the bishop protects c4 and stops ...b5) 10...0-0 11 0-0 e5 12 ♖d1 ♕e7 13 ♗f1 a6 14 a4 ♖fe8 15 ♗d2 ♘e4 16 ♗e1 exd4 17 exd4 h5 18 ♗g2 h4 19 g4 ♕f6 20 ♕c2, Vyzhmanavin-Gofshtein, Debrecen Echt 1992. This complex example has usually been considered slightly better for White but the activity and harmony of Black's pieces should be respected in practical play.

6...♗g7 *(D)*



7 ♘bd2

Or:

a) 7 ♗e3 c5 8 ♘bd2 is unconvincing: 8...♘h6! 9 dxc5 ♘xc5 10 ♗xc5 dxc5 11 0-0 (11 ♕a4+ ♗d7 12 ♕xa7 b6 with good compensation) 11...0-0 12 ♘e4?! ♕a5 13 ♖fd1 b5 and Black is much better, Scarella-Bezold, Buenos Aires 1992.

b) Interesting though not the most natural is 7 d5!? c6 8 ♘c3 ♘gf6 (those who like action can try 8...♘c5!? 9 ♕a3 b5 with complications) 9 ♗e3 ♕a5 10 ♘d4 c5!? (those who don't like action should play 10...♘c5 11 ♕c2 cxd5 12 cxd5 ♗d7 =) 11 ♘c2 a6 12 ♗d2 b5 13 cxb5 axb5 14 f3 (14 h3!?) 14...b4 15 ♘d1 ♗f5 16 e4 ♘e5! 17 exf5 c4 18 ♕e3 ♘xd5 19 ♕e2 ♘d3+ 20 ♔f1 ♘xb2 21 ♘xb2 ♗xb2 22 ♖e1 0-0 23 ♕xc4 ♖fc8 24 ♕d3 ♕xa2 with good compensation, Pfleger-Jansa, 2nd Bundesliga 1994/5.

7...c5 8 e3

Again, 8 dxc5 ♘xc5 offers Black quite active piece-play. 9 ♕a3 ♗d7! (the '!' was given by Lautier and Polugaevsky though 9...a5! looks logical too) 10 ♘b3 ♘a4 11 ♘bd4 ♕b6! (this is better than allowing compensation after 11...♕a5+?! 12 b4! ♕c7 13 0-0 ♕xc4 14 ♗e3) 12 e3 ♘f6 13 0-0 0-0 14 b3 ♘c5 15 ♖d1 a5 16 ♗d2 ♖a8 17 ♗e1 ♖fc8 18 ♖ab1 e5! 19 ♘e2 ♗f5 20 ♖a1 a4! (20...♘d3? 21 ♘h4! ±) 21 b4 ♘ce4 22 ♖ac1 ♗e6 ∓ and c4 was weak in Anić-Hodgson, Metz 1994.

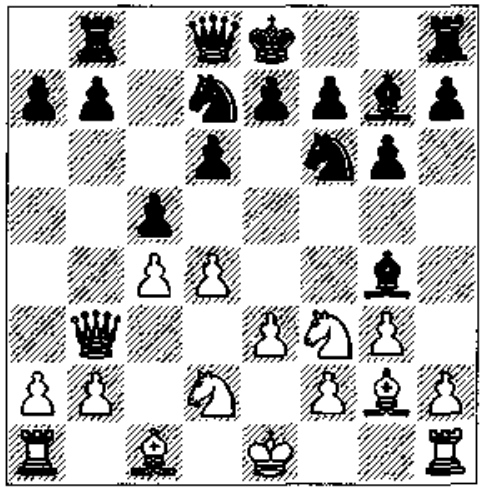
8...♘gf6 *(D)*

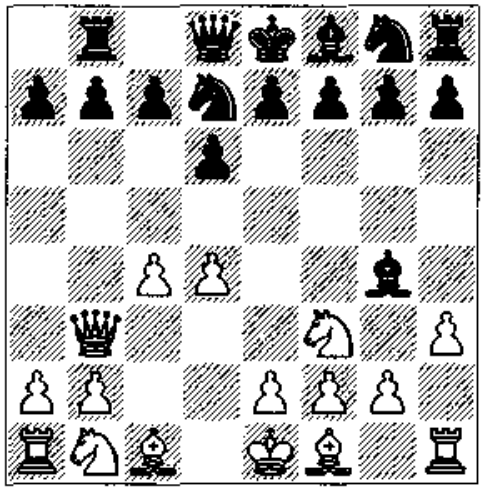
9 0-0

9 a4 0-0 10 0-0 e6 (10...♕a5 11 h3 ♗xf3 12 ♘xf3 ♘e4 13 ♕d3 f5 14 ♘d2 ♘ef6 15 d5 a6 16 ♖a3 ± Razuvaev-Jansa, Prague 1992) 11 h3 ♗xf3 12 ♘xf3 d5 13 ♖d1 dxc4 14 ♕xc4 ♖c8 15 ♕b5 ♕c7 = Polak-Jansa, Olomouc 1995.

9...0-0

Ribli likes this move more than the Benko-style possibility 9...b5!? 10 cxb5 a6 11 ♘g5? (11 a4!? 0-0 gives

W 

B 

Black compensation) 11...0-0 12 f3 ♖xb5! 13 ♕d3 cxd4! ∓ 14 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 15 fxg4 dxe3 16 ♕xe3 ♘xg4 17 ♕a7 ♘c5! 18 ♖xf7 ♗d4+ 19 ♔h1 ♔xf7, Blatny-Jansa, Münster 1992.

10 h3 ♗xf3 11 ♘xf3 ♕c7

White's queenside is weak, and this compensates for the bishop-pair.

12 ♗d2 ♘e4

12...a6 13 a4 ♘e4 14 ♖fd1 ♘xd2 15 ♖xd2 ♖fc8 16 ♗f1 ♕a5 was level in Chetverik-De Santis, Budapest 1999.

13 ♗e1 ♖fc8 14 ♕d3 ♘ef6 15 b3 a6 16 ♖c1 b5 17 ♗d2 b4 18 ♖fd1 a5

Though it was not obligatory for Black to relieve the tension, he has a solid position and space on the queenside, Vaganian-Speelman, Bundesliga 1997/8. The game is roughly level.

Conclusion: Black gets sufficient counterplay, with the key move being ...c5. This line should also be OK in a practical sense because the side with an active position tends to score well.

C2)

5 h3 *(D)*

5...♗xf3

Better than 5...♗h5?! 6 g4! (White also has good play after 6 ♗f4!? ♗xf3 7 ♕xf3 e5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♗d2 ♘gf6 10 ♘c3 ♗c5 11 g4! h6 12 h4! intending g5 and ♗h3, Miles-Kavnatsky, Los Angeles 1988) 6...♗g6, and then:

a) 7 ♗f4 h5!? 8 g5 e5! 9 ♕e3 f6 10 ♘h4 ♘e7?! (10...♗f7! is unclear) 11 ♘xg6 ♘xg6 12 ♗h2 f5 13 ♘c3 c6 14 ♖g1 ♕e7 15 0-0-0 is slightly better for White, Scherbakov-Khomeriki, Mlada Boleslav 1994.

b) 7 ♗g2 e5 8 ♗e3! c6 9 0-0 a6 10 ♘c3 ♕c7 11 ♖ad1 ± ♘gf6?! (after the superior move 11...♗e7 the exchange sacrifice 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♖xd7!? ♕xd7 14 ♘xe5 gives White good compensation) 12 ♘h4 ♗e7 13 f4 exf4 14 ♗xf4 0-0 15 e4 ± Ivanov-Vorotnikov, USSR 1991.

6 ♕xf3

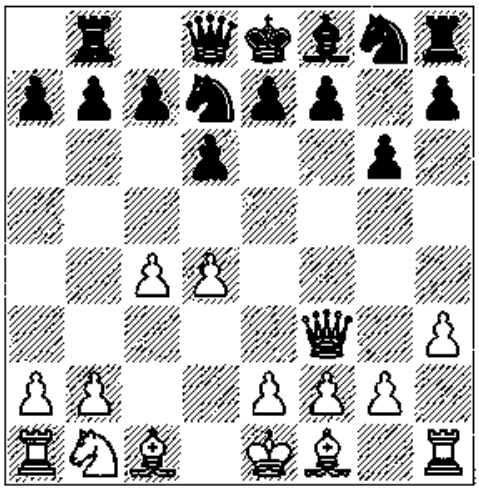
Now White has problems with his clumsy queen.

6...g6 *(D)*

Or:

a) 6...e5 doesn't look very logical in view of 7 e3 ±.

b) 6...c5 7 dxc5 ♘xc5 should be playable. White has tried the somewhat risky 8 b4!? ♘d7 9 ♗b2 ♘gf6 10 ♘d2 g6 11 ♘e4 ♕b6 (after 11...♗g7! White might suffer due to his poor development) 12 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 13 ♗xf6 exf6 and now 14 a3 ± is better than 14 ♖b1 d5!, Schwalfenberg-Sokolovs, 2nd Bundesliga 1995/6.



7 ♘c3

Or:

a) The rather inactive 7 e3 ♗g7 8 ♕d1 allows Black to equalize easily with 8...c5 (or 8...e5 9 ♗e2 exd4 10 exd4 d5!? 11 0-0 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♘e7 = Zitnik-Vaulin, Zadar 2000) 9 dxc5 (9 d5) 9...♘xc5 10 ♗e2 ♘f6 11 ♘c3 0-0 12 0-0 a6 13 ♕c2 ♕d7 14 ♗d2 (14 b4 ♘ce4 15 ♗b2 ♘xc3 16 ♕xc3 ♖fc8 =) 14...♖fc8 15 b4 ♘e6 16 ♕b3 ♘g5! 17 ♖ad1 b5 18 cxb5 axb5 19 ♗e1 ♘fe4 = Timoshchenko-Jansa, Czech Republic 1999.

b) Interesting is 7 ♕a3 ♗g7 8 e3 (8 ♕xa7!? is not a 'human' move but is not easy to refute immediately) 8...a6?! (8...c5 9 dxc5 ♘xc5 looks more active) 9 ♗e2 ♘gf6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖d1 c6 12 ♗d2 ♕c7 13 ♗e1 b5 14 ♗a5 ♕b7 15 ♘d2 c5 16 ♗f3 ♕a7 17 dxc5 ♘xc5 18 ♖ac1 ± Karpov-Hickl, Baden-Baden 1995, though the placing of the white queen on a3 is somewhat odd. However, it is very unusual if Karpov plays positionally unjustified moves.

c) After 7 e4 ♗g7 8 ♕d1 c6 (8...c5 9 d5 ♘gf6 10 ♘c3 ±) 9 ♘c3 Black can force a draw with 9...♕b6 10 ♗e3 ♕xb2 11 ♘a4 ♕b4+ 12 ♗d2 ♕a3 13 ♗c1 ♕b4+ 14 ♗d2 ♕a3 15 ♗c1 ½-½ Votruba-M.S.Hansen, Tåstrup 1992.

7...♗g7 8 e3

The clumsy 8 ♕d3?! c5 9 d5 invites complications: 9...♘e5 10 ♕c2 ♘xc4 11 ♕a4+ b5 12 ♘xb5 ♘b6 13 ♘c7+ (13 ♕xa7!?) 13...♔f8 14 ♕xa7 ♕c8 15 ♘b5 ♘xd5 16 ♕a4 ♘b4 (16...♕c6! is much better for Black) 17 e4 ♘f6 18 f3 and now 18...d5! (instead of 18...♘h5 19 ♔f2, Wl.Schmidt-Jansa, 2nd Bundesliga 1992/3) is good.

8...c5!

When this line became popular at the beginning of the 1990s, 8...e5 was considered obvious but practice has shown it to be slightly suspicious as it exposes the light squares:

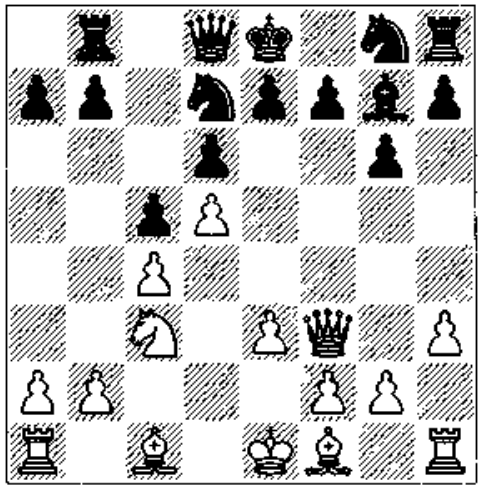
a) 9 ♕d1 ♘e7 (9...exd4!? 10 exd4 ♘e7) 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 0-0 c6 (12...f5!?) 13 e4 ♘c8 14 ♗e3 ♕e7 15 ♕a4 ± Sitnik-Maslak, Pardubice 1999.

b) 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♕d1 f5 11 g4!? (11 e4 appears safer, with a slight advantage for White) 11...♘e7 12 gxf5 ♘xf5 13 ♘e4 0-0 14 c5 ♔h8 15 h4 led to very complicated play in K.Arkell-Hodgson, Dublin 1991.

c) 9 d5 f5 10 e4 ♘e7 11 g4! 0-0 12 gxf5 gxf5 13 ♗e3 (13 ♖g1!?) 13...♘g6 14 0-0-0 (14 exf5!? ♘h4 15 ♕g4) 14...♘c5 (14...fxe4 ±) 15 exf5 e4 16 ♘xe4? (16 ♕h5 ± leaves Black in difficulties) 16...♘h4 17 ♕g4 h5! 18 ♕xh5 ♘xe4 gives Black a slight advantage, Naumkin-Hodgson, Cappelle la Grande 1992.

9 d5 *(D)*

B



9...a6

It is tempting but somewhat unnecessary to play 9...♗xc3+!? 10 bxc3:

a) 10...♕a5 11 ♗d2 ♘gf6 and now:

a1) 12 ♗e2?! leaves White's queen in trouble: 12...♘e5 13 ♕f4 ♕a4! (a standard idea in this position-type, blockading and pressing against c4 at the same time; it is better than the unclear 13...b5 14 cxb5 ♘xd5 15 ♕h6) 14 0-0 ♔d8 15 ♖fc1 ♔c7 16 ♗e1 h6 17 ♖ab1 g5 18 ♕f5 ♘xc4 19 ♕d3 b5 ∓ Mchedlishvili-Gelman, Russia Cup (Krasnodar) 1998.

a2) Better is the humble 12 ♕d1! ♘e4 13 ♗d3 f5 14 0-0 ♘e5 15 ♗e1 0-0 16 f3 ♘f6 (16...♘xd3 17 ♕xd3 ♘f6 18 a4 ±) 17 ♗e2 ± Flear-Adams, London WFW 1990.

b) 10...♘gf6!? 11 g4?! (11 ♕d1 is Ribli's recommendation; then 11...♕a5 12 ♗d2 transposes to variation 'a2') 11...♕a5 12 ♕d1 h5! 13 gxh5 (13 ♖g1 hxg4 14 hxg4 ♘e4 15 ♕c2 ♘e5 ∓) 13...♖xh5 14 ♕b3 ♘e4 is much better for Black, Miles-Adams, Tilburg 1993.

10 ♗d2 ♘gf6 11 a4

Or:

a) 11 e4 is a natural continuation leading to a typical Old Benoni position. 11...0-0 12 ♗e2 e6 13 0-0 ♘e5 14 ♕f4 exd5 15 exd5 ♘e8 16 ♕g3 f5 17 f4 ♘d7 18 a4 ♗d4+ 19 ♔h1 ♘g7 is equal, Ki.Georgiev-Hickl, Altensteig 1995.

b) 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 g4?! (12 e4 e6) 12...♘e5 13 ♕g2 b5! 14 cxb5 axb5 15 ♘xb5 c4 16 a4 ♘fd7 17 0-0 ♘c5 allowed Black to gain too much Benko-style compensation in Bagirov-Jacobs, Gausdal 1991.

11...0-0 12 ♕d1 e6

Black leads the position to a rather standard type of Modern Benoni where the white pieces are not very actively placed. In the Benoni Black is usually quite happy to get rid of his light-squared bishop.

13 ♗e2 exd5 14 cxd5 ♖e8

Ribli suggests playing 14...b5!? 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♗xb5 (16 ♘xb5 ♘b6 17 ♘a7?! ♖a8 18 ♘c6 ♖xa1 19 ♕xa1 ♕d7 ∓) 16...♘xd5 and after 17 ♘xd5 ♖xb5 18 ♗c3 ♗xc3+ 19 bxc3 ♘b6 the position simplifies into equality.

15 0-0 ♘e4

Black's control over the central squares is strong enough for equality

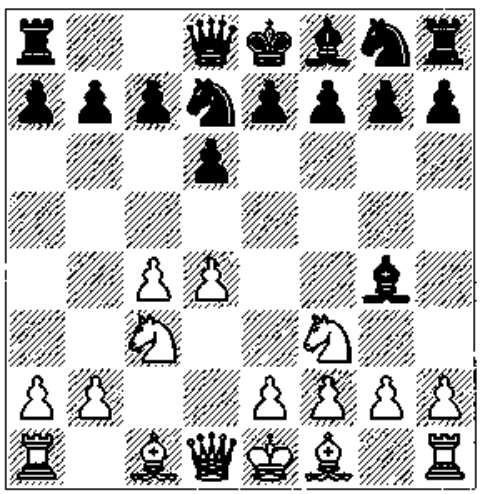
in spite of White's bishop-pair. I.Ivanov-Benjamin, USA Ch (Parsippany) 1996 continued 16 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 17 ♕c2 ♖e8 18 a5 ♕g5 19 ♗c4 b5! (more active than 19...♕h4 20 ♖fc1 ♘e5 21 ♗e2 ±) 20 axb6 ♘xb6 21 ♖xa6 ♘xc4 22 ♕xc4 ♖xb2 23 ♗c3 (this move leads to a drawish ending but White must exchange Black's strong bishop) 23...♗xc3 24 ♕xc3 ♕e5 25 ♕xe5 ♖xe5 26 ♖xd6 ♖d2 27 ♖d8+ ♔g7 28 d6 h5 29 d7 ♔f6 30 ♖c1 ♖f5 31 f4 ♖fd5 32 ♖c8 ♖xd7 33 ♖8xc5 ♖e2 34 ♖g5 ♖xe3 35 ♖c6+ ♖e6 36 ♖xe6+ ½-½.

Conclusion: The same comments apply to this line as to Line C1: ...c5 is still the key move. In fact, after 4 ♕b3 ♖b8, it may well be that Black has most trouble after 5 ♘c3, which leads one to ask if that move might be even more logical a move earlier...

D)

4 ♘c3 *(D)*

B



4...e5

Or:

a) 4...♗xf3 is discussed in Line C of Chapter 13. If Black wants to play for a win this may well be the most attractive option. This is what Hodgson usually does.

b) 4...g6 is a slightly tame version of the Modern Defence. 5 e3! (5 g3 ♗xf3 6 exf3 transposes to note 'a' to White's 6th move in Line B of Chapter 13, while 5 e4 ♗xf3 6 ♕xf3 transposes to Line B2 of this chapter) 5...♗g7 6 ♗e2 ♘gf6 7 0-0 0-0 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♗xf3 c6 10 ♖e1 ± Schilstra-Hodgson, Guernsey 1991.

Now (after 4...e5):

D1: 5 e3 95
D2: 5 g3! 101

Or:

a) 5 d5?! ♗e7 6 e4 transposes to note 'b3' to White's 5th move in Line B1.

b) 5 e4?! is rather risky: 5...♗xf3 (Black can also play safe with 5...exd4 6 ♕xd4 ♘e7 7 ♗e2 ♘c6 8 ♕d1 ♗e7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♘d4 ♗xe2 11 ♘dxe2 ♖e8 = Moran-Perez, Matanzas Capablanca mem 1995) 6 gxf3 g6 7 ♗e3 ♗g7 8 f4 exd4 9 ♗xd4 ♘gf6 10 ♕d2 0-0 11 0-0-0 ♖e8 12 ♗g2?! (12 f3 is unclear) 12...♘b6 13 ♕d3 ♘h5 ∓ Twardon-Kuczynski, Lubniewice 1993.

D1)

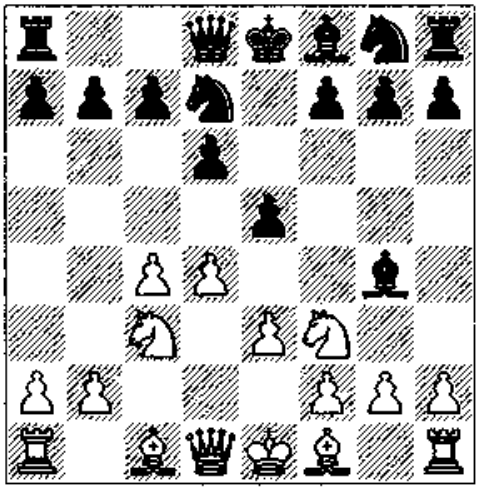
5 e3 *(D)*

Now:

D11: 5...c6 96
D12: 5...♘gf6 97

The former generally signifies that Black intends ...f5.

B



Alternatives:

a) 5...f5?! may be premature because of 6 h3 ♗h5 7 dxe5 (stronger than the unclear 7 ♗e2 ♗e7 8 ♕b3 e4 9 ♘d2 ♗xe2 10 ♘xe2 ♕c8 11 g4 g6 12 gxf5 gxf5 13 ♘f4 c6 14 f3 ♘gf6, Pähtz-Miles, Bad Wörishofen 1990) 7...dxe5 8 ♕d5! (8 ♗e2 ♗b4 9 ♕b3 ♕e7 10 ♘xe5 ♗xe2 11 ♘xd7 ♗xc4 12 ♕xc4 ♗xc3+ 13 ♕xc3 ♕xd7 14 b3 ♘f6 15 0-0 0-0 16 ♗a3 ± A.Petrosian-Minnullin, St Petersburg 1993) 8...c6 9 ♕e6+ ♕e7 10 ♕xf5 ± Ftačnik.

b) 5...g6!? 6 ♗e2 ♗g7 7 0-0 (7 h3!? ♗xf3 8 ♗xf3 should be better) 7...♘e7 8 b3 0-0 9 ♗b2 ♗xf3 10 ♗xf3 exd4 11 exd4 c6 12 ♗g4 ♘f6 13 ♗h3 d5 14 ♖e1 ♖e8 = Prakash-Speelman, Calcutta 1999.

D11)

5...c6 6 h3

White can include this move or play straight away 6 ♗e2 ♗e7 7 0-0 f5 8 e4! f4 9 c5! ♗xf3 10 ♗xf3 ♘gf6 11 cxd6 ♗xd6. Then:

a) 12 d5 c5 (12...cxd5) 13 ♘b5 ♕e7 14 b4 cxb4 15 a3 0-0 16 axb4 a6 17 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 18 ♗d2 b5 ± Dautov-Mokry, Brno 1991.

b) Stronger looks 12 ♗xf4! exf4 13 e5 0-0 (13...♘xe5? 14 dxe5 ♗xe5 15 ♖e1 ♕e7 16 ♕e2 +−) 14 exd6 ♘b6 15 ♕b3+ ♔h8 16 a4 ♖b8?! (16...♕xd6 17 a5 ♘bd5 ±) 17 a5 ♘c8 18 ♗xc6 ± Chuchelov-Bezold, Dresden 1994.

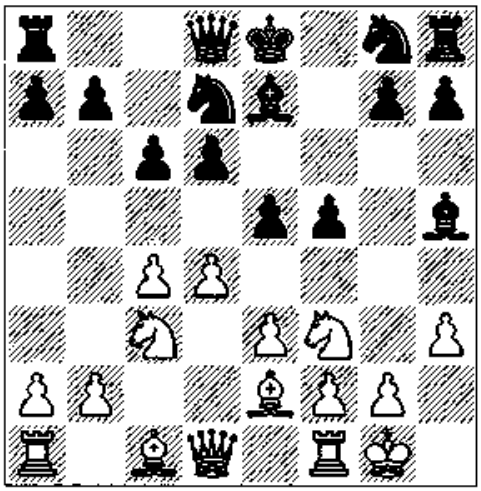
6...♗h5 7 ♗e2 ♗e7

This is also a bad moment to play 7...f5 for a couple of reasons: 8 dxe5 (also 8 g4!? fxg4 9 ♘h2 ♘gf6 10 hxg4 ♗g6 11 ♘f1 ± followed by ♘g3 looks positionally nice for White) 8...dxe5 9 e4! f4? 10 ♘xe5 ♗xe2 11 ♕xd7+ ♕xd7 12 ♘xd7 ♗xc4 13 ♘xf8 ♔xf8 14 ♗xf4 ±.

8 0-0 f5!? *(D)*

This move is risky but interesting, and demands active play from White. 8...♘gf6 is still possible, leading to solid Old Indian-style play.

W



9 e4!

White should avoid 9 c5? e4! 10 cxd6 ♗xd6 (10...exf3?? 11 dxe7 ♘xe7 12 ♗xf3 ±) 11 ♘d2 ♗xe2 12 ♕xe2 ♘gf6 13 ♘c4 (after 13 f3 Black can

continue 13...♕e7 or even 13...♘h5!?) 13...♗c7, and now:

a) 14 b3?! b5! 15 ♘d2 ♕e7 16 ♖d1 0-0 17 ♘f1 ♘b6 leaves Black better. Vera-Gulko, Lucerne Wcht 1993 continued nicely: 18 ♗b2 ♘fd5 19 a4 f4! 20 exf4 ♘xf4 21 ♕xe4 ♕g5 22 ♕f3 (both 22 ♕xc6? ♘xh3+ and 22 ♘g3? ♖ae8 23 ♕xc6 ♘xh3+ are winning for Black) 22...♖ae8 23 ♕g4? (23 ♖e1) 23...♕xg4 24 hxg4 b4 25 ♘a2 ♘e2+ 26 ♔h1 ♘d5 27 f3 ♖e6 28 ♗c1 ♖ff6 29 g5 ♖f5 30 ♘h2 ♗xh2 0-1.

b) 14 f4! 0-0 (14...exf3?! 15 ♕xf3 g6 16 e4 is worse) 15 ♘e5 ♘b6 ∓ minimizes the damage, but is positionally nice for Black.

9...f4

9...fxe4 10 ♘xe4 d5 (10...♗g6 11 ♘eg5; 10...♗xf3?! 11 ♗xf3 d5 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♘c3 e4 14 ♗h5+ g6 15 ♘xd5 gxh5 16 ♗f4) 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 ♘eg5 ♗xf3 13 ♘xf3 e4 14 ♘e5 ♘gf6 15 ♕b3 ♘b6 (15...♕b6 16 ♘xd7! ±) 16 a4 ±.

10 c5! ♗xf3 11 ♗xf3

Now:

a) 11...exd4 12 ♕xd4 ♘e5 13 ♗xf4 ♘xf3+ 14 gxf3 ±.

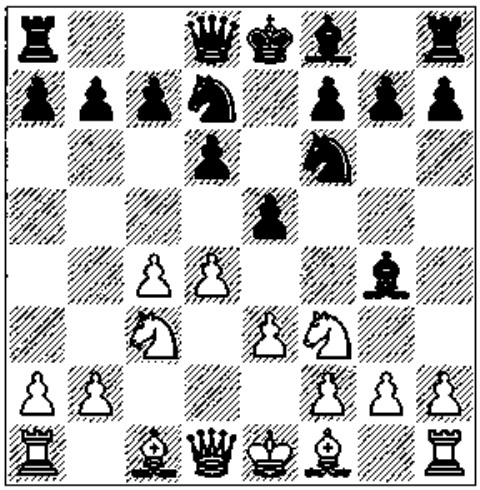
b) 11...dxc5!? 12 dxe5 ♘xe5 13 ♗xf4 (13 ♗h5+ g6 14 ♗xf4 ♘d3! 15 ♗e3 gxh5 16 ♕xh5+ ♔f8 17 ♕f5+ ♔e8 18 e5 is unclear) 13...♕xd1 14 ♗xd1 ♘d3 15 ♗g3 ♘xb2 16 ♗e2 ♖d8 is precarious for Black but he may well survive.

c) 11...♘gf6 12 cxd6 ♗xd6 13 dxe5 (Ftačnik gives this but 13 ♗xf4! exf4 14 e5 should be possible; compare note 'b' to White's 6th move) 13...♗xe5 14 ♕b3 ♘c5 15 ♕c4 ♕e7 with an unclear position.

Conclusion: It is risky for Black to opt for an early ...f5 even if it is not completely refuted. No wonder most players these days are content with the Old Indian-style play in Line D12.

D12)

5...♘gf6 *(D)*



This is Black's safest option. He will get a well-known Old Indian position with an extra tempo if White plays e3-e4 later on.

6 ♗e2 ♗e7

After 6...c6 7 0-0 ♗e7 White has also tried the idea 8 b4!? (8 b3 and 8 e4 lead to similar positions to those in the main line) 8...0-0 9 ♖b1 ♗f5 10 ♖b2 ♕c7 11 ♕b3 h6 12 a4 ♖fe8 13 ♗d2 ♘e4 (13...e4!?) 14 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 15 ♗c3 ♗f6 with equality, Krasenkov-Miles, London Lloyds Bank 1993.

7 0-0

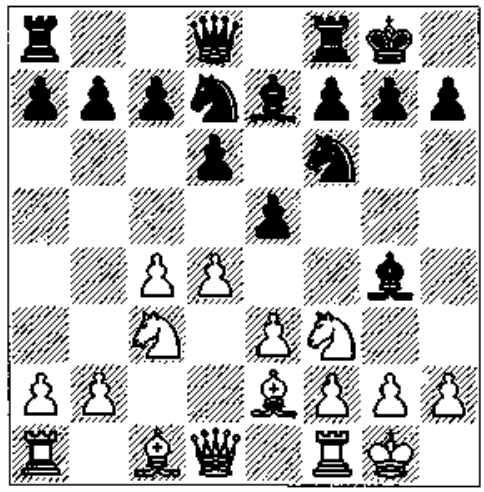
Including the moves 7 h3 ♗h5 at this moment doesn't help White much. 8 0-0 0-0, and then:

a) 9 e4?! has not been tried here, probably because of 9...♗g6!.

b) 9 b3 ♖e8 10 ♖e1!? (after 10 ♗b2, 10...exd4!? looks like a good equalizing attempt because after 11 exd4 Black has the good-looking move 11...d5!) 10...♗f8 11 e4 c6 (putting pressure on e4 with 11...♗g6!? looks good) 12 ♗b2 a5 13 d5 ♘c5 14 ♗f1 ♕b6 15 ♖b1 a4 16 ♗c1 axb3 17 axb3 ♕b4 18 ♗d2 ± Van Wely-Jansa, Gausdal 1992. Complicated King's Indian-type play has developed.

c) 9 b4!? ♖e8 10 a4 exd4 (10...e4 11 ♘d2 ♗xe2 12 ♕xe2 d5 13 ♗a3 c6 14 ♖fb1 ♘f8 15 b5 gave White more play in Guliev-Mokry, Ceske Budejovice 1992) 11 ♘xd4 ♗xe2 12 ♕xe2 ♗f8 13 ♖d1 g6 14 ♗a3 c6 15 b5 ♕c7 16 ♖ac1 ♘e5 17 ♘f3 ♖ad8 = I.Ivanov-Miles, New York 1994.

7...0-0 *(D)*



8 b3

After 8 e4!? White is a tempo down compared with a similar Old Indian line but it is hard to say if the tempo is valuable enough for Black to equalize. After 8...c6 9 ♗e3 Black has a wide choice:

a) 9...♗h5!? 10 ♕c2 (White could consider playing 10 h3 ♗g6 11 ♘d2) 10...♘g4 11 ♗c1 ♗g6 12 h3 ♘gf6 13 ♗e3 exd4 14 ♗xd4 ♖e8 15 ♖fe1 ♘c5 16 ♗xc5 dxc5 17 ♖ad1 ♕c7 18 ♘h4 ♗d6 19 ♘xg6 hxg6 20 ♗f1 ♗e5 = and Black was fine with the bishop on d4 in Azmaiparashvili-Romanishin, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1983.

b) 9...♗xf3 10 ♗xf3 h6 11 d5 ♕b8 12 b4 ♖c8 13 ♕b3 ♗d8 14 a3 ♗b6 15 ♗xb6 ♘xb6 16 ♖ac1 is very slightly better for White because of his space advantage, Vadasz-Bezold, Gyula Perenyi mem 1997.

c) 9...♖e8 10 d5 ♕a5 11 ♘d2 ♗xe2 12 ♕xe2 ♘b6! (exchanging a pair of knights as White has the space advantage) 13 ♖fc1 ♘a4 14 ♘xa4 ♕xa4 15 f3 ♖ec8 16 dxc6 bxc6 17 ♘b1 ♘d7 18 ♘c3 ♕b4 19 ♖c2 ♘c5 20 ♖d1 ♖d8 21 ♔h1 a5 22 b3 h6 23 g3 ♗g5 24 ♗f2 h5 = Andersson-Khalifman, Reykjavik 1991.

d) 9...a6 looks like a useful move:

d1) 10 ♘d2 ♗xe2 11 ♕xe2 b5 12 a3 exd4 13 ♗xd4 ♖e8 14 f4 ♘f8 15 ♕f3 ♘e6 16 ♗e3 ♘d7 17 ♖ad1 ♕c7 18 ♕g3 ♗f6 gave Black good counterplay in Gavrilov-Timoshchenko, Moscow 1988 since 19 e5? embroils White in unfavourable complications: 19...dxe5 20 ♘de4 exf4 21 ♗xf4 ♘xf4 22 ♖xd7 ♗xc3 −+.

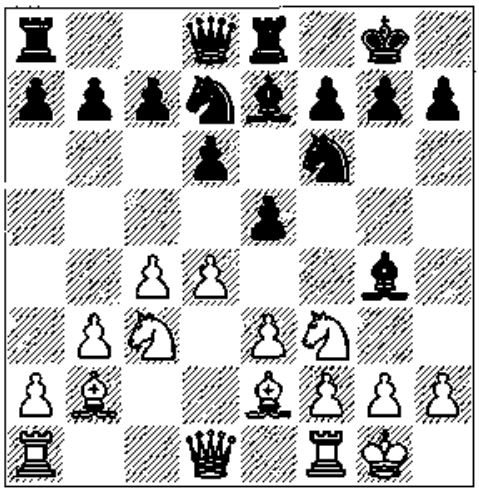
d2) 10 d5 cxd5 11 cxd5 ♗xf3 12 ♗xf3 ♕a5 13 a3 ♖fc8 14 ♕d2 ♗d8 15 b4 ♕c7 16 ♖fc1 ½-½ Khalifman-Gofshtein, Ischia 1996. Black could continue with 16...♕b8 17 ♖c2 ♗b6 =.

d3) 10 a3!? ♖e8 (maybe 10...b5!? is a better idea; for example, 11 d5

cxd5 12 cxd5 ♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♕b8 followed by ...♖c8 and ...♗d8) 11 d5 cxd5 12 cxd5 ♖c8 13 ♘d2 ♗xe2 14 ♕xe2 ♕c7 15 ♖fc1 ♕b8 16 a4 ♖c7 17 a5 h6 18 g3! ♘h7 19 h4 ♘hf6 20 ♔g2 ♖ec8 21 ♖a4 ♘c5 22 ♖c4 ♘cd7 23 ♖b4 ♘c5 24 ♖a1 ♖f8 25 ♖c4 ♖fc8 26 ♖a3 h5 27 f3 g6 28 b4 ♘cd7 29 b5 ± Korchnoi-Gi.Hernandez, Groningen FIDE 1997. This is a good example of how routine play can lead to trouble.

8...♖e8 9 ♗b2 *(D)*

B



9...c6

Or:

a) 9...exd4!? 10 ♘xd4 ♗xe2 11 ♕xe2 ♗f8 has not been tried but looks rather solid.

b) 9...♗f8 may be slightly preferable, with the following possibilities:

b1) 10 ♖c1 c6 11 b4 e4 12 ♘d2 ♗f5 13 ♘b3 d5 14 c5 g6 15 b5 h5 16 a4 ♗h6 17 a5 a6 18 bxc6 bxc6 19 ♘a4 ♖a7 20 ♘b6 ♕c7 leads to a closed position that is quite comfortable for Black, who can create pressure on the kingside: 21 h3 ♔g7 22 ♖c3 ♘h7 23 ♗c1 ♘g5 24 ♔h1 ♘f6 25 ♘a1 ♖h8 26 f4? exf3 27 ♗xf3 ♘fe4 0-1 Frois-Hauchard, Linares 2000.

b2) 10 ♕c2 c6 (or 10...e4!? 11 ♘d2 ♗f5 12 ♖fe1 c6 13 ♘f1 d5 14 f4 exf3 15 ♕xf5 fxe2 16 ♖xe2 ♘b6 = Vivaldo-Milos, São Paulo 1997) and now White has not found anything convincing:

b21) 11 ♖ad1 e4! 12 ♘h4!? d5 13 h3 ♗xe2 14 ♕xe2 g6 15 f4 exf3 16 ♕xf3 ♗b4 17 cxd5 ♗xc3 18 ♗xc3 cxd5 19 g4 ♕e7 20 ♘g2 ♕e4 ∓ Høi-Jansa, Copenhagen 1991.

b22) 11 ♖ae1 ♕c7 12 ♘g5 ♗xe2 13 ♖xe2 exd4 14 exd4 ♖xe2 15 ♕xe2 ♖e8 16 ♕d2 d5! ∓ 17 ♖e1? ♕f4! 18 ♗c1 ♖xe1+ 19 ♕xe1 ♕xd4 ∓ Kosyrev-Chekhov, Moscow 1998.

b23) 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♖ad1 ♕c7 (12...e4 13 ♘d4 ♕c7 14 h3 ♗xe2 15 ♘cxe2 g6 16 ♗c3 ♗g7 = Pfleger-Lobron, Bundesliga 1993/4) 13 h3 ♗h5 14 ♘g5 ♗g6 15 ♗d3 ♗xd3 16 ♕xd3 ♘c5 17 ♕f5 ♕c8 18 ♕xc8 ♖axc8 19 b4 ♘cd7 ½-½ Uhlmann-Jansa, Leipzig 1973.

b3) Rather unambitious is 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♕c2 e4 12 ♘d4 c5 13 ♘db5 a6 14 ♘a3 ♕c7 15 ♖ad1 ♗xe2 16 ♕xe2 ♖ad8 17 ♘d5 ♘xd5 18 ♖xd5 ♘b6 19 ♖xd8 ½-½ Uhlmann-Tal, Leningrad IZ 1973.

b4) The most critical looks 10 h3 ♗h5 11 g4 ♗g6 12 ♘h4 ♘e4! 13 ♘xg6 ♘xc3 14 ♗xc3 hxg6, when in spite of White's bishop-pair this position was regarded as equal by Gulko, maybe because of some weakness on White's kingside. The game Pomes-Jansa, Andorra 1996 continued 15 ♗f3 c6 (15...e4 16 ♗g2 d5 17 f3 ±) 16 ♗g2

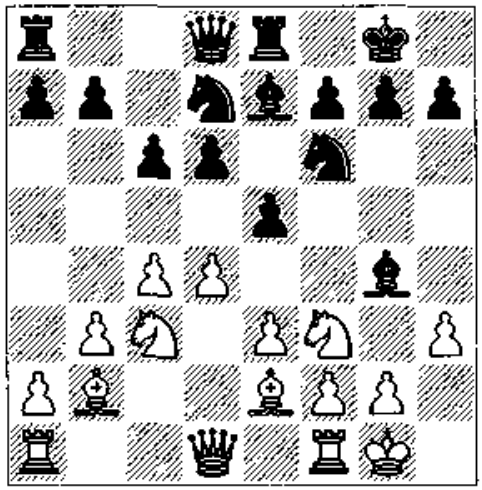
♕h4 17 b4 (however, it may be possible that White has a small edge after 17 f4!?) 17...♘f6 18 ♕c2 e4 19 f4 exf3 20 ♖xf3 ♘e4 =.

10 h3 *(D)*

This is better than 10 b4 e4 11 ♘d2 ♗xe2 12 ♕xe2 d5 13 b5 ♖c8 14 a4 ♗b4 15 ♖fc1 dxc4 16 ♘xc4 ♘d5 17 bxc6 bxc6 18 ♘a2 ♗f8 = Känel-Tukmakov, Biel 1999.

Instead, 10 ♕c2 ♗f8 transposes to note 'b2' to Black's 9th move.

B



10...♗h5?!

Black should continue 10...♗xf3 11 ♗xf3 ♗f8 12 dxe5 (after 12 ♕c2 ♕e7 Black is ready to play 13...e4) 12...dxe5 13 ♕c2 ♕c7 14 ♖ad1 a5 15 g4 h6 16 ♖d2 ♘c5 17 ♖fd1 ♖ad8 18 ♕f5 ½-½ Ftačnik-Smejkal, Prague 1986. Black's position is very solid. However, maybe White could insert the moves h3 and ...♗h5 at an earlier point so as to avoid this possibility.

11 g4!

This is certainly more critical than:

a) 11 ♘h4 ♗xe2 12 ♘xe2 ♗f8 13 ♘f5 g6 14 ♘fg3 a5 15 ♘c3 ♕b6 16 ♕c2 exd4 17 ♘a4 ♕c7 18 ♗xd4 d5 19 cxd5 ♘xd5 = Tibensky-Jansa, Stary Smokovec 1991.

b) 11 d5 e4!? 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 ♘d4 ♗xe2 14 ♕xe2 ♘e5 15 f3! exf3 16 ♘xf3 ♖c8 17 ♖ad1 ♕c7 18 ♘d4 ♖cd8 19 ♘f5 ♗f8 20 ♘h6+!? ♔h8 21 ♖xf6!? gxf6 22 ♕h5 ♗xh6 23 ♕xh6 ♖e6 24 ♘e4 with compensation for the exchange, Larsen-Spassky, Malmö Ct (6) 1968.

11...♗g6 12 ♘h4 ♗f8 13 ♘xg6!

13 dxe5 dxe5 (not 13...♘xe5? 14 f4 ♘fxg4 15 ♗xg4 +–) 14 ♘xg6 hxg6 15 g5?! ♘h7 16 h4 is less dangerous due to the drawing sacrifice 16...♘xg5! 17 hxg5 ♕xg5+.

13...hxg6 14 ♗f3 e4

After 14...g5!? 15 d5 c5 the black set-up is harder to break, though White still enjoys a solid plus.

15 ♗g2 d5

Now:

a) After 16 f3?!, White suffered from the lack of kingside defence in Tisdall-Gulko, San Francisco 1995: 16...♗b4 17 g5 ♘h5 18 h4 ♘g3 19 fxe4 ♗xc3 20 ♗xc3 ♘xe4! (20...♘xf1 21 ♕xf1 dxe4 22 ♕f4 gives White nice positional compensation) 21 ♗b4?! (the bishop is more effectively placed on e1) 21...a5 22 ♗a3 a4! 23 ♖f4 axb3 24 axb3 ♕c7 25 cxd5 cxd5 26 ♖c1 ♕a5 27 ♗xe4?! ♖xe4! 28 ♖xe4 dxe4 29 ♗d6 ♕f5! 30 ♗f4 ♘b6 31 ♕e2 ♘d5 32 ♗g3 ♕h3 33 ♗f2 ♖a3 34 ♕c4 ♕g4+ 35 ♔f1 ♘xe3+! 36 ♗xe3 ♕f3+ 37 ♗f2 ♖a2 0-1.

b) A stronger continuation is 16 g5! ♘h7 17 h4 ♘b6 18 c5 ♘d7 19 f3 ±.

Conclusion: It is not easy to give a definite verdict on this positional line. Although there are many move-orders and the moves h3 and ...♗h5 can be included almost at any time, White has basically two main approaches. He can go for an Old Indian a tempo down with e3-e4 but it is not clear how important this tempo is. If White instead fianchettoes his queen's bishop, the strongest idea seems to be exchanging Black's intrusive light-squared bishop with g4 and ♘h4. However, this creates some weaknesses in White's own camp. This line is important in practice because White has various move-orders which reach the same line and therefore no 2...♗g4 practitioner can expect to avoid it.

D2)

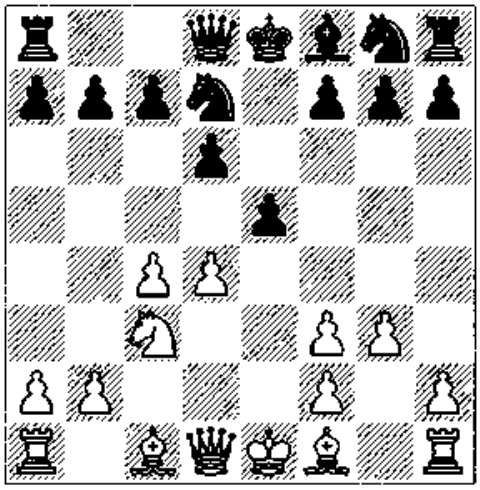
5 g3!

After Black has played ...e5, White doesn't usually have to be concerned about the doubled-pawn formation. Black cannot strive for the e6-d5-c6 formation any more and he has more light-square weaknesses.

5...♗xf3

A characteristic move for our defence. 5...♘gf6 6 ♗g2 c6 7 0-0 ± leads to a line of the Old Indian that gives White a solid plus.

6 exf3 *(D)*


B

6...exd4

Black has the following alternatives, none of which can equalize convincingly, although with some of them Black comes very close:

a) 6...♗e7 7 dxe5 ♘xe5 (Ribli's suggestion 7...dxe5 8 ♗g2 ♘gf6 9 0-0 0-0 10 f4 c6 looks slightly better but White still enjoys a small and enduring plus) 8 f4 ♘d7 9 ♗g2 c6 10 g4! (using his pawn-majority) 10...♘b6 11 ♕e2 ♘f6 12 g5 ♘fd7 13 ♗e3 ± I.Sokolov-Hickl, Jakarta 1996.

b) 6...g6 and then:

b1) In the closed position-type after 7 d5 ♗g7 8 ♗g2 ♘gf6 (8...♘e7) 9 0-0 0-0 10 f4 ± the white bishops don't work so well.

b2) 7 f4 is a more critical continuation:

b21) After 7...♗g7!? 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♗g2 ± the position is the same as in Hegde-Miles, Calcutta 1994 in which Black came very close to equality after 9...♘e7 10 0-0 (10 ♕b3!?) 10...c6 11 fxe5 ♘xe5 12 ♕b3 ♕c7 13 ♗f4 0-0 14 ♖fe1 ♘f5.

b22) 7...exf4 8 ♗xf4 ♗h6 (8...♗g7 9 ♗g2 ♕e7+ 10 ♔f1 ±) 9 ♗xh6 ♘xh6 10 ♕d2 ♘f5 11 ♗h3 ♘g7 12 ♕e3+ ♔f8?! (12...♕e7 13 0-0 ±) 13 0-0 ♘f6 14 ♕f3 ♖b8 15 ♖fe1 ± Dizdar-Hickl, Erevan OL 1996.

c) 6...♘gf6 7 ♗g2 ♗e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 f4 c6 10 ♖e1 (both 10 d5 and 10 ♗e3

are worth considering although the text-move is more forcing) 10...exd4 11 ♕xd4 ♖e8 is very similar to the main line. Wells-Hickl, Austrian Cht 1997 continued 12 ♗d2!? (12 b3) 12...♕b6 13 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 14 b3 ♘fd7 15 ♖e3 ♗f6 16 ♖d1 ♘c5 =.

d) 6...♘e7!? is a notable idea:

d1) 7 ♗g2 exd4 8 ♕xd4 transposes to note 'a' to Black's 7th move.

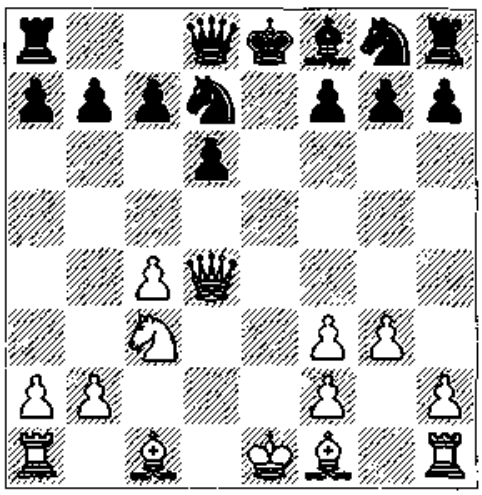
d2) 7 f4 exd4 8 ♕xd4 transposes to note 'b' to Black's 7th move.

d3) 7 dxe5!? dxe5 8 f4 ♘c6 leads to equality.

d4) After 7 ♗h3 exd4 8 ♕xd4 ♘c6 9 ♕e3+ ♗e7 10 ♘d5 0-0 11 ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 12 0-0 ♖e8 (12...♘c6!? may be slightly more accurate; why force the white queen to a good square?) 13 ♕c3 a5 14 b3 ♘c6 15 ♗b2 ♘f6 16 ♖ae1 ± ♖xe1 (16...a4!?) 17 ♖xe1 d5 18 cxd5 ♘b4 19 a3 ♘bxd5 20 ♕c5 c6 Black is passive but solid. In the game San Segundo-Adams, Madrid 1998, he defended without a problem.

7 ♕xd4 *(D)*

B



7...♘gf6

Black has to consider whether the knight is well placed here. The serious alternative is 7...♘e7!?:

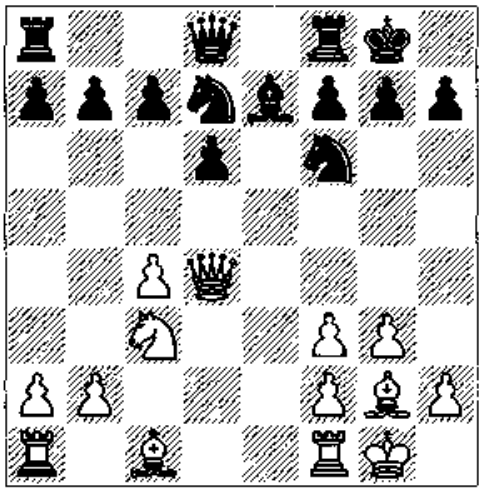
a) 8 ♗g2 ♘c6 9 ♕e3+ ♗e7 10 0-0?! (White should play 10 ♘d5 0-0 11 ♘xe7+; compare with note 'd4' to Black's 6th move) 10...0-0 11 ♘d5 (safer is 11 b3 ♗f6 12 ♗b2 a5 13 ♕d2 ♘c5 14 ♘d5 ♗xb2 15 ♕xb2 ♘e7 ½-½ Salo-Yrjölä, Finnish Cht 2001) 11...♗f6! 12 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 13 ♕g5 (13 ♕f4) 13...♕d4 14 ♗e3 ♕xc4 15 ♖fc1 ♕e6 16 f4 ♘f6 17 ♕b5 ♖ab8 ∓ Clavijo-R.Perez, Cienfuegos 1996.

b) 8 f4 ♘c6 9 ♕d2 ♗e7 10 ♗g2 0-0 11 0-0 ♗f6 12 b3 a5 13 ♗b2 ♘c5 14 ♘d5 ♗xb2 15 ♕xb2 ♖e8 16 ♖fd1 ♘e7 = Anić-Hickl, Montpellier 1993.

c) 8 ♗h3 transposes to note 'd4' to Black's 6th move, and may well be best.

8 ♗g2 ♗e7 9 0-0 0-0 *(D)*

W



10 f4

Even the alternatives may be unpleasant for Black:

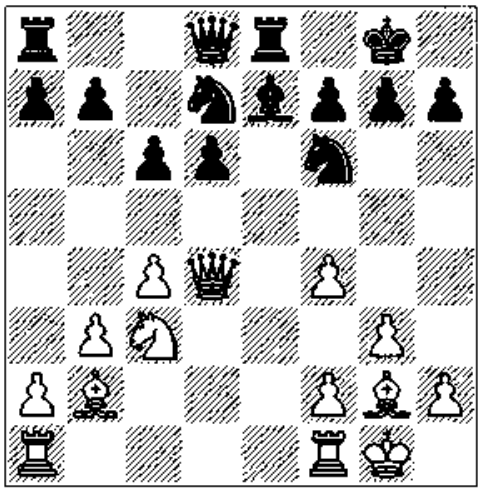
a) 10 b3 ♖e8 11 ♗b2 ♗f8 12 ♘e4 a5 13 ♗c3 ♕b8?! (13...a4) 14 ♖fe1 a4

15 b4 ♘xe4 16 fxe4 ♕a7 17 ♕xa7 ♖xa7 18 f4 ± Portisch-Foldi, Hungarian Ch (Budapest) 1966.

b) 10 ♗e3!? looks slightly strange, because the bishop generally wants to go to the long diagonal. However, it has been very successful in practice: 10...♖e8 11 f4 c6 12 h3 a5 (12...d5?! 13 cxd5 ♗c5 14 ♕d2 ♗xe3 15 fxe3 cxd5 16 ♘xd5 ♘b6 17 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 18 ♖ac1 ± Eingorn-Jansa, Hamburg 1999, was an unconvincing attempt but maybe Black can try 12...♘b6 13 ♖ad1 ♕c7, intending ...♖ad8 and ...d5) 13 b3 ♘c5 14 ♖ad1 (14 ♖ab1 ♗f8 15 g4 g6 16 ♖bd1 ± Vyzhmanavin-Mokry, Tilburg 1994) 14...♕b6 15 ♕d2 ♕c7 16 ♕c2 ±.

10...c6 11 b3 ♖e8 12 ♗b2 *(D)*

B



White has the bishop-pair and active pieces. Only the g2-bishop is not so active because of the b7-c6 wall. Black has a structural weakness on d6 and it doesn't seem easy for him to create counterplay except with the plan ...a5-a4. Even though White's kingside pawn-structure is somewhat inflexible, White has the plan of advancing his kingside pawns. This should add up to a small advantage for White.

12...♗f8 13 ♗f3

Black's one hope is a well-timed breakthrough with ...d5: 13 ♖fd1 ♕b6 14 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 15 ♗a3 ♖ad8 16 ♖d3 d5! 17 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 18 ♖ad1 ♖d7 19 cxd5 ♖ed8 20 ♗h3 ♖d6 21 g4 ♘fxd5 22 ♗g2 ♖6d7 and Black has a slight advantage, Stocek-Jansa, Czech Republic 1998.

13...♕b6

13...h5 doesn't stop the pawns: 14 h3 ±.

14 ♕d2!

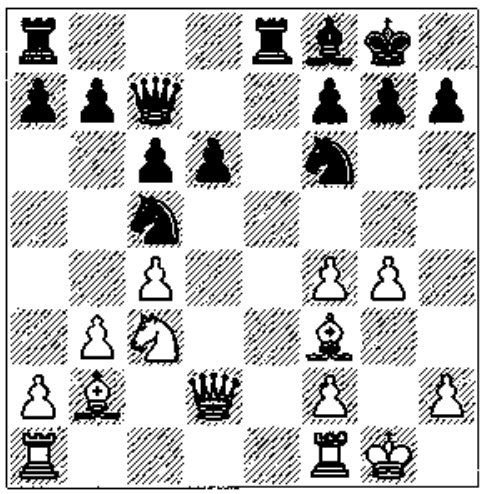
It seems to be difficult for White to advance after 14 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 =. Black has the plan ...a5-a4. Also, he may soon be able to play ...d5, as in the note to White's 13th move.

14...♕c7

14...♘c5 15 ♖fe1 a5 seems more active. With ...a4 Black can hope to create some weaknesses in White's camp.

15 g4! ♘c5 *(D)*

W



16 ♖fe1

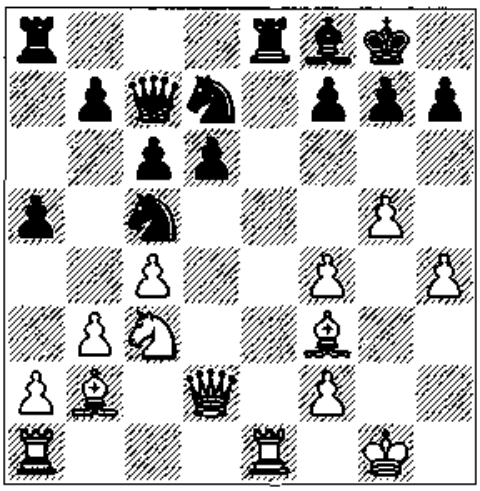
16 g5?! ♘fe4 17 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 18 ♕c2 d5! 19 ♗e5 ♖xe5 20 fxe5 ♘xg5 ∓ allows Black counterplay.

16...a5

Black secures the knight on c5 and is ready to strike with ...a4 at a suitable moment. After 16...♖xe1+!? 17 ♖xe1 ♖e8 18 ♖xe8 ♘xe8 White has a slight advantage; Black's position is solid but passive.

17 g5 ♘fd7 18 h4 *(D)*

B



18...♕b6

Black doesn't seem able to achieve ...a4. For instance, 18...a4 19 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 20 b4 ± or 18...♖xe1+ 19 ♖xe1 a4 20 b4 a3 21 ♗a1 ±.

19 ♗a3!

This move stops the only chance for counterplay (19...a4 20 b4) which could come after 19 ♔g2?! a4.

White now has a solid plus. The rest of Van Wely-Timman, Breda playoff (3) 1998 is a nice example of effective realization but not very interesting from our point of view: 19...♘e6 20 ♖ad1 ♕d4 21 ♗g4! ♕xd2 22 ♖xd2 ♘dc5 23 f5 ♘f4?! (the seemingly active knight gets into trouble; the passive continuation 23...♘c7 24 ♖ed1 ♘7a6 ± is better) 24 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 25 ♗xc5 dxc5 26 ♔h2 ± (the knight is trapped!) 26...g6 27 f6 h5 28 ♔g3 ♘e6 29 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 30 ♖d8 ♖d6 31 ♖xd6 ♗xd6+ 32 f4 b6 33 ♔f3 ♔f8 34 ♔e4 ♔e8 35 ♘e2 ♔d7 36 f5 b5 1-0.

Conclusion: This line is probably the biggest challenge for Black after 3...♘d7. Because Black's position is so awfully passive in the main line, he should seriously consider some of the alternatives on move 6 or 7, especially 6...♘e7 or 7...♘e7. If Black wants to play for a win he can try 4...♗xf3, but in that case he might consider making this exchange on the third move, when there is considerably less theory to study.

13 The Early ...♗xf3

In this chapter we study lines after 1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 c4 where Black plays ...♗xf3, either immediately or after 3...♘d7 and then making the capture after certain 4th moves by White. With this move Black gives up the bishop-pair, but in return weakens White's pawn-structure by giving him doubled pawns.

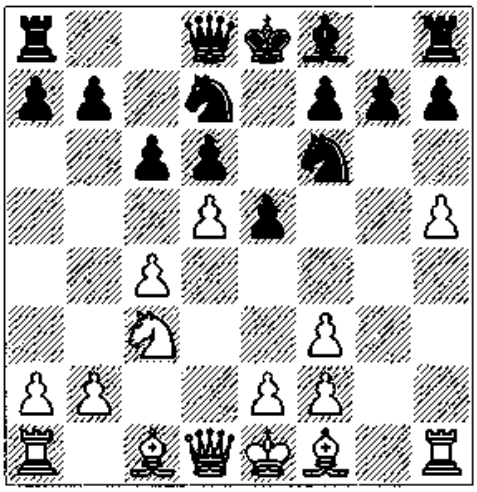
The general evaluation of the positions in this variation is probably close to ±, as White has the bishop-pair, and the position might become quite stable, with White activating his bishops and controlling the position with them.

However, there are some motivations for Black to play an early ...♗xf3. Firstly, the pawn-structure becomes nicely unbalanced. Secondly, the pawn weaknesses require White to play actively, testing his understanding of the position. And finally, Black usually has more targets and plans, and his play is more concrete than White's.

Based on these characteristics, some strong players have used an early ...♗xf3 as a weapon to play for a win. Again, these players include British grandmasters like Michael Adams and especially Julian Hodgson, though there are others too. Hodgson, for example, has the habit of starting with 3...♘d7 and in certain cases exchanging on f3 (see Lines B and C).

Typical positions and plans for White

B

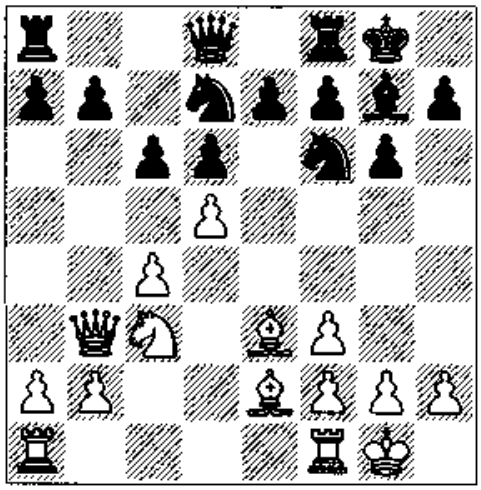


Lobron – Van der Wiel
Gran Canaria 1996

Usually it is useful for the player with the bishop-pair to open the position. However, sometimes it is far more important first to stabilize the position. In this position White has played d5, which stops Black's most active counterplay with ...exd4 followed by ...♘e5/...♘c5.

The following diagram shows the normal position after 4 exf3, where White has again played the d5 advance. White's bishops control the queenside effectively, and his plan is to exert increasing pressure on Black's position

B

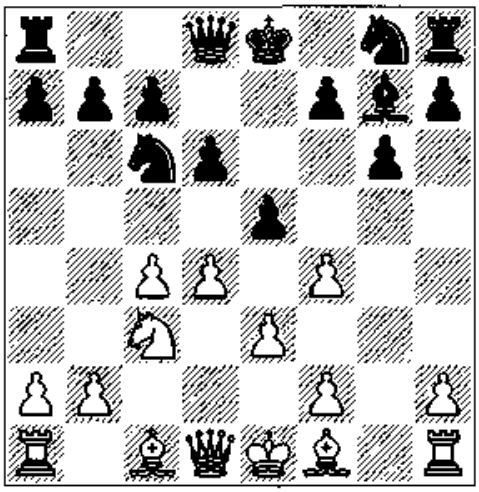


Gelfand – Ivanchuk
Belgrade 1997

with moves like ♖fd1, ♖ac1 and f4. White hopes that Black will not find any targets in the strong white position.

Typical positions and plans for Black

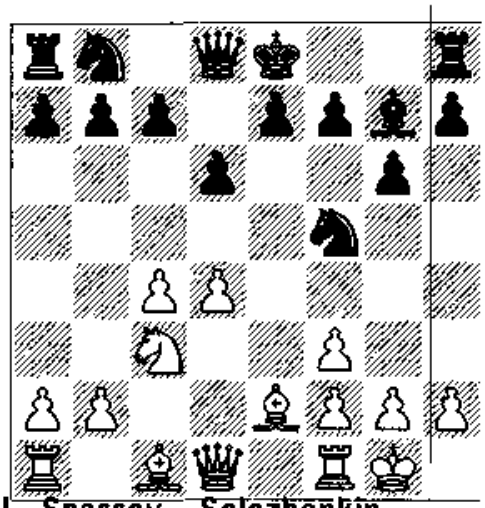
W



Schüssler – Agrest
Malmö 1993

Black can generate some pressure against White's centre with ...g6, ...♗g7 and ...♘c6. If White advances the d4-pawn, then Black sometimes gains access to squares like c5, d4 and e5. If White supports the d4-pawn, then Black gets very active play with the ...e5 break.

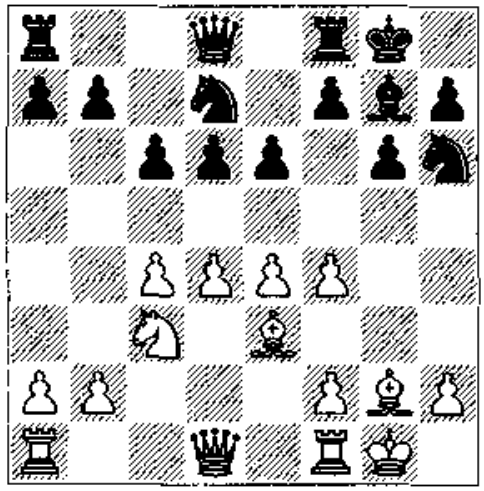
W



L. Spassov – Solozhenkin
Berga 1993

Sometimes it is useful to create pressure by means of ...♘h6-f5 instead of ...♘c6. Black may wish to play ...c6 and ...d5, or he might need additional pieces in the centre; ...♘c6 can always be played later. White usually has no clear way of stopping the ...♘f5 plan, as g4 weakens his king too much, and ♗d3xf5 only improves Black's pawn-structure by bringing his pawns closer to the centre.

In the following diagram, Black can also continue in a flexible manner, awaiting White's actions. In this position White has an impressive centre, but Black still has more targets than White. Both of the breaks ...e5 and



Alterman – Hodgson
Bundesliga 1997/8

...c5 are possible, as is the attack on White's centre with moves like ...♕h4 and ...♘f6-h5.

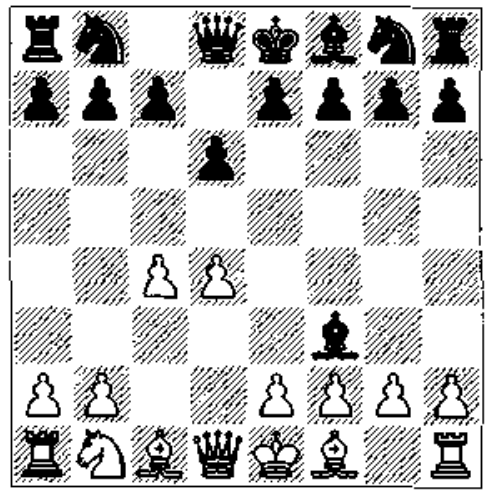
1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 c4

We now discuss the following continuations:

A: 3...♗xf3 107
B: 3...♘d7 4 g3 ♗xf3 114
C: 3...♘d7 4 ♘c3 ♗xf3 116

A)

3...♗xf3 *(D)*



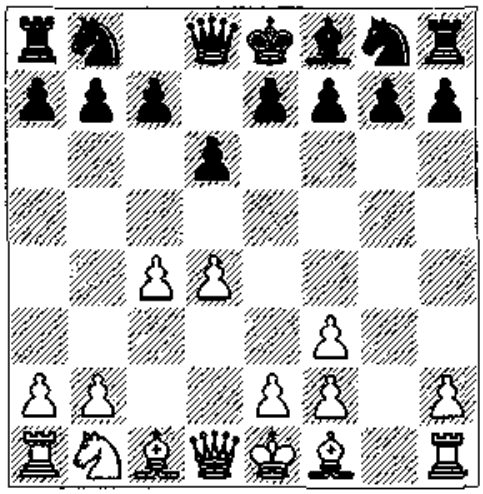
A logical option for Black is to take on f3 at once, thus weakening White's pawn-structure. There is an additional motivation when White has played c4, because it leaves the d4-pawn weak, as White can no longer support it with his c-pawn.

Now:

A1: 4 gxf3 107
A2: 4 exf3 111

A1)

4 gxf3 *(D)*



Now:

A11: 4...c6 107
A12: 4...g6 110

A11)

4...c6

White has doubled pawns, so Black takes control of the centre and develops in a flexible manner. He is aiming to create a solid structure with pawns on c6, d5 and e6, which makes it difficult for White to improve his pawn-structure.

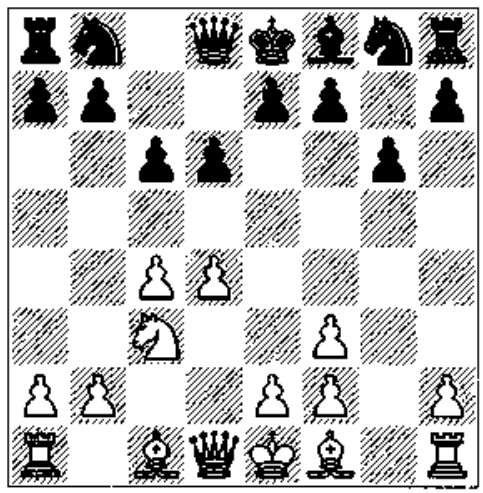
5 h4!

White wants to activate his pieces and improve his pawn-formation with the plan h5 and possibly hxg6.

The alternative is 5 ♘c3:

a) 5...♘f6 is too committal at this stage, and White can open some lines for his bishops: 6 f4! (6 e4 g6 7 ♗e3 ♗g7 8 ♕d2 ♘bd7 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 ♗h6 e5 11 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 12 0-0-0 ♕b6 13 f4 ♕xd4 14 ♕xd4 exd4 15 ♖xd4 ♘c5 16 e5 dxe5 17 fxe5 ♘e8 18 b4 ♘e6 19 ♖d7 a5 with good dark-square counterplay, Ali-Leski, Saint Afrique 1997) 6...♘bd7 7 d5! cxd5 8 ♘xd5 e6 9 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 10 ♗g2 (10 ♕a4+ ♕d7 11 ♕xd7+ ♔xd7 12 ♗g2 ♖b8 13 ♗e3 b6 14 0-0 ♗e7 15 ♖fd1 ♖hc8 16 b3 g6 17 ♗d4, Draško-Petronić, Yugoslavia 1994, 17...♔e8 = intending ...♘d7) 10...♕d7 11 ♕d3 ♖b8 12 ♗e3 with a slight advantage for White.

b) 5...g6 *(D)* is correct:



b1) 6 f4 ♗g7 and then:

b11) 7 ♖b1 e6 8 d5 exd5 9 cxd5 ♘e7 10 ♗g2 0-0 11 0-0 ♘a6 (11...c5!?) 12 a3 ♖e8 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 f5 gxf5 15 ♔h1 d5 16 ♗g5 ♘c5 17 ♖g1 ♕d6 18 e4 fxe4 19 ♗xe4 ♘g6 ∓ Szilagyi-Borsos, Hungary 1997.

b12) 7 e3 e6 8 ♗d3 ♘e7 9 ♗d2 ♘d7 is a typical example of a flexible set-up for Black, where White's bishops lack targets: 10 ♕b3 ♕c7 11 ♘e4 0-0 12 0-0-0 (12 ♗c3!?) 12...c5 13 dxc5 d5! 14 cxd5 (14 ♘c3? ♘xc5 15 ♕c2 ♘xd3+ 16 ♕xd3 dxc4 ∓) 14...exd5 15 ♘c3 ♘xc5 16 ♕c2 ♖fc8 17 ♔b1 a6 18 ♘e2 ♕d7 19 ♘c3 b5 gave Black an attack in Kryshilovsky-Bagrunov, St Petersburg 1996.

b2) 6 h4 is too late, and Black can stabilize the position with 6...♘f6 7 ♗g5 ♘bd7 8 ♗h3 ♗g7 9 ♕d2 ♕b6 10 b3 ♕c7 11 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 12 ♖d1 h5 13 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♘e4 ♗g7 15 ♕e3 ♕c7 16 ♖g1 d5 17 ♘g5 ♕h2 ∓ Gruskovnjak-Medak, Bled 1999.

b3) 6 e3 e5 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9 a3 ♘d7 10 b4 a5 (10...f5 11 e4 fxe4 12 ♘xe4 ♔c7 13 ♗b2 ♖e8 14 ♖d1 ± Draško-Popchev, Čačak 1991) 11 ♖b1 axb4 12 axb4 f5 13 e4 ♗h6 14 ♗b2 ♔c7 15 c5 is unclear according to Draško.

b4) 6 ♗g5 ♗g7 7 e3 ♘d7 8 ♗e2 ♕a5 9 ♖g1 c5 gives Black counterplay on the long diagonal, though the game gets quite unclear after 10 d5 h6 11 ♗h4 g5 12 ♗g3 ♗xc3+ 13 bxc3 ♕xc3+ 14 ♔f1 ♘gf6 15 ♖b1 b6 16 ♕a4 ♔f8 17 ♔g2 ♕d2 18 ♕b3 ♖g8 19 ♖gd1 ♕a5 20 ♕d3 ♕a6 21 ♕f5, as in the game Piket-Ki.Georgiev, Wijk aan Zee 1988.

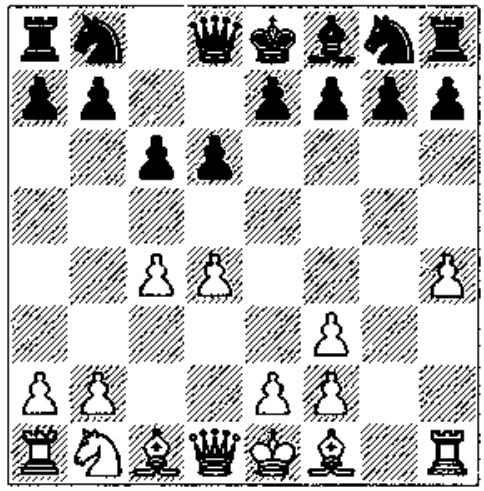
We now return to 5 h4 *(D)*:

5...♘f6

Or:

a) 5...g6?! 6 h5 ± is what White wants.

B



b) 5...h5 is possible: 6 ♘c3 ♘d7 7 ♗g5 ♘gf6 8 ♕d2 e6 9 d5 cxd5 10 cxd5 e5 11 0-0-0 ♗e7 12 ♔b1 a6 13 ♗h3 b5 14 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 ½-½ Schmidt-Chekhov, Lubniewice 1994.

6 h5 ♘bd7

It is a bit surprising that the logical 6...h6!? has not been played more often, as Black seems to be OK after 7 ♘c3 e5 8 d5 ♗e7 9 e4 ♘h7. White then has to complicate with 10 f4 0-0 (10...exf4!?) 11 c5!? exf4 12 ♗xf4 dxc5 13 d6 ♗f6 14 ♕g4 ♘d7 15 ♗xh6 ♗xc3+ 16 bxc3 ♕f6 17 ♗d2 ♘e5 18 ♕g3 ♘f3+ 19 ♔e2 ♘xd2 20 ♔xd2 ♖fe8 with a messy position in which Black appears to be fine, Chatalbashev-Popchev, Bulgaria 1994.

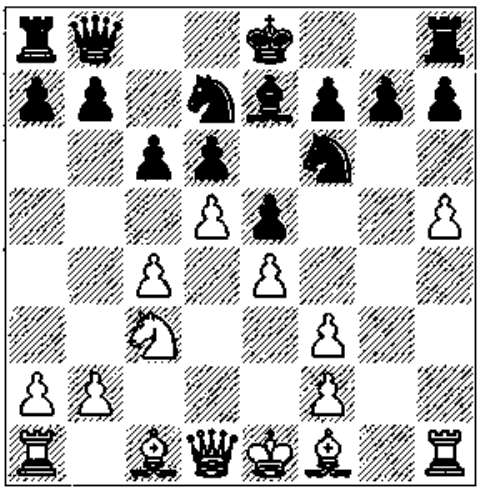
7 ♘c3 e5 8 d5!

By closing the centre White stops Black's counterplay and gains time to put his bishops on efficient squares to control the position.

8 e3 ♗e7 9 ♗d3 exd4 10 exd4 allows Black to fix the centre by means of 10...d5! 11 cxd5 ♘xd5 12 ♘xd5 cxd5, when the position is balanced: 13 ♕b3 0-0! (13...♘b6 14 ♗b5+ ± Lobron-Rivas, Debrecen Echt 1992) 14 ♕xd5 (14 ♕xb7 ♘b6 with good compensation) 14...♘c5 15 ♗xh7+ (15 ♕xd8 ♘xd3+ 16 ♔d2 ♖axd8 17 ♔xd3 ♗f6 18 ♗e3 ♖d5 =) 15...♔xh7 16 ♕f5+ ♔g8 17 dxc5 ♕a5+ 18 ♔f1 ♕xc5 with equality.

8...♗e7 9 e4 ♕b8! *(D)*

W



The thematic plan ...♗d8-b6xe3 seems to make this position playable for Black.

10 ♗e3 ♗d8 11 ♕d2 ♗a5

If Black wants to play for a win then 11...cxd5!? might be an option: 12 ♘xd5 (12 cxd5 h6 ∓ intending ...♗b6) 12...♘xd5 13 ♕xd5 ♗b6 14 ♗h3 (14 ♖d1 ♗xe3 15 fxe3 ♔e7! ∓) 14...♕c7 with a lot to play for.

12 0-0-0 cxd5 13 exd5 ♕c7 14 ♔b1 a6 15 ♖c1 0-0 16 ♗d3 ♔h8 17 ♕c2 ♗b6

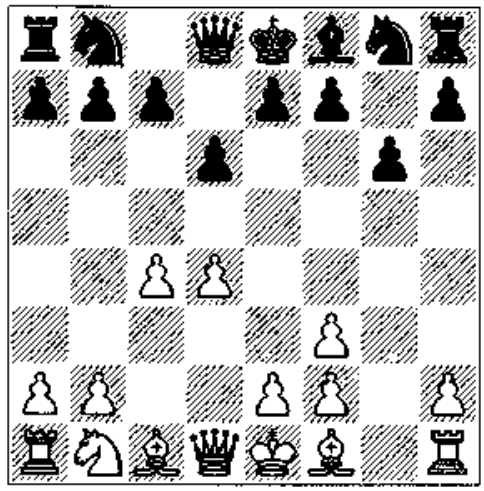
Both sides have chances, Lobron-Van der Wiel, Gran Canaria 1996.

Conclusion: The variation 4 gxf3 c6 should not give Black too many problems. White's thematic active plans

seem to lead to equal positions, with a lot of play still left.

A12)

4...g6 *(D)*



Black's plans are similar to those in Line A2: quick development and counterplay in the centre.

5 ♘c3

Or:

a) 5 ♗g2 c6 6 ♘c3 ♗g7 7 0-0 ♘d7 8 ♖e1 ♘gf6 9 e4 e5 10 ♗e3 0-0 11 ♕d2 ♘h5 (a thematic example of Black's plans to slow down the play in the centre) 12 ♖ad1 exd4! 13 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 14 ♕xd4 ♕g5 15 ♘e2 ♘e5 16 ♔h1 ♖ad8 ∓ Belamarić-Puljek Salai, Poreč 1994.

b) 5 e3 ♗g7 6 ♕b3 ♕c8 7 ♘c3 ♘d7 8 ♗g2 c6 9 ♗d2 ♘gf6 10 f4 0-0 11 0-0 ♘e8 12 ♘e4 ♖b8 13 ♖ac1 c5 14 ♕d3 ♘c7 15 b4 b6 = Ros-Craig, corr. 1992.

c) 5 ♕b3 attacks the weakened b7, but Black has no special problems:

c1) 5...b6!? is possible: 6 f4 ♗g7 7 ♗g2 c6 8 e3 e6 9 a4 (9 d5!?) 9...♘e7 10 a5 ♘d7 11 ♕a3 d5 12 axb6 ♘xb6 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 ♘c3 0-0 ∓ Koskinen-Tella, Finnish Cht 2000.

c2) 5...♕c8 is the main move: 6 ♗h3 (6 h4 ♘f6 7 ♗h3 ♘bd7 8 ♘c3 ♗g7 9 f4 c6 10 e4 ♘h5 11 ♗e3 ♕c7 12 f5 a6 13 ♗g4 ♘hf6 14 ♗f3 c5 is good for Black, Clavijo-Spangenberg, Paranana 1993) 6...♘d7 7 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 8 c5 ♔e8 9 cxd6 cxd6 10 ♘c3 ♕d7 11 ♗f4 ♗h6 (11...♗g7!?) 12 ♗xh6 ♘xh6 13 ♘d5 (Liogky-Popchev, Val Thorens 1990) 13...♖c8! ∓ with the point that 14 ♕e3 ♘f5 15 ♘f6+ ♔d8 16 ♘xd7 ♘xe3 17 fxe3 ♔xd7 is good for Black.

d) The thematic 5 f4 might give White some advantage; for example, 5...♘f6 6 ♕b3 ♘c6!? 7 e3 ♕c8 8 ♗g2 (8 ♘c3 ♗g7 9 h4 e6 10 ♗h3 ♘e7 11 e4 ♘h5 12 ♗e3 f5 leaves the battle for the centre still open, Schöne-Lorenz, Karl Marx Stadt 1990) 8...♗g7 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 ♗d2 ♖b8 and now the play seems to become quite slow and positional: 11 0-0 a6 12 ♖ac1 ♕g4 13 ♕d1 ♕h4 14 ♕f3 e5 15 d5 ♘a5 16 ♘e2 b6 17 ♕g3 ♕h5 18 f3 ♘b7 19 fxe5 dxe5 20 ♕h3 ± Matlak-Woda, Slupsk 1989.

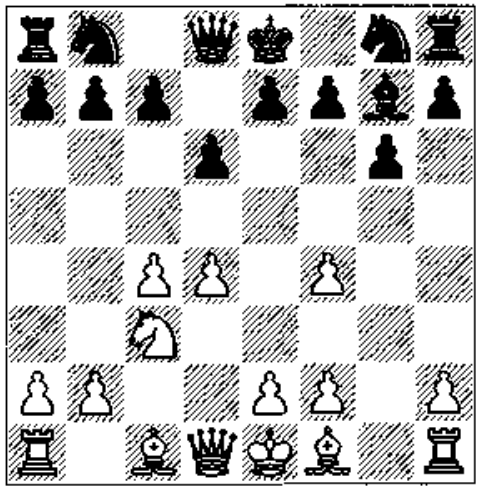
e) 5 h4 ♘f6 6 ♕b3 ♕c8 7 ♗h3 ♘bd7 8 ♘c3 c6 9 ♗g5 ♗g7 10 0-0-0 ♕c7 11 ♔b1 ♕b6 = 12 ♕c2 and now Black should avoid 12...0-0? 13 h5!, Pushkov-Savon, Orel 1995.

5...♗g7 6 f4 *(D)*

6 e4?! ♘c6 7 ♗e3 e5 is again a misguided plan, as White closes the centre himself, and Black is better after 8 d5 ♘d4 9 ♘b5 ♘xb5 10 cxb5 ♘f6 11 ♕d2 ♘h5 12 h4 ♗f6 13 0-0-0 ♗xh4 ∓ Leiber-Hartoch, Ostend 1987.

6...♘c6!?

B



This active move gives Black good counterplay.

A more positional approach is also possible with 6...c6:

a) 7 ♕d3 e6 8 e3 ♘e7 9 ♗e2 ♘d7 10 ♗d2 d5 11 ♖c1 ♘f5 12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♘a4 0-0 14 ♗g4 ♘d6 15 ♗b4 ♘f6 16 ♗f3 ♖e8 17 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 18 ♔f1 ♖e7 ∓ Vokač-Okhotnik, Marianske Lazne 1989.

b) 7 h4!? ♕b6 (7...h5!?) 8 e3 ♘d7 9 h5 0-0-0 10 ♗d2 ♘gf6 11 h6 ♗f8 12 b4 e5 13 c5! ± Gerber-Ireneusz, Geneva 1994.

c) 7 e3 ♘d7 8 ♗d3 e6 9 ♘e4 ♘df6 10 ♘g5 ♘e7 is sound for Black, Pinter-Christiansen, Reggio Emilia 1987/8.

7 e3

7 d5!? Agrest.

7...e5 8 fxe5 dxe5 9 d5 ♘ce7 10 c5 ♘f6 11 e4

11 ♗c4!? Agrest.

11...0-0 12 ♗e2 b6 13 ♗e3

13 b4 a5 14 ♗a3 axb4 15 ♗xb4 bxc5 16 ♗xc5 c6! gives Black good counterplay.

13...♘d7 14 b4

14 c6 ♘f6 is also good for Black.

14...a5

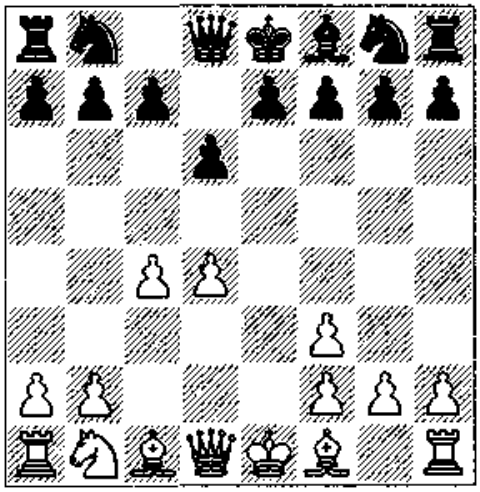
White has quite an impressive centre, but Black's lead in development gives him good chances of active counterplay. The game Schüssler-Agrest, Malmö 1993 continued sharply: 15 cxb6 cxb6 16 ♕b3 ♘c8 17 h4 ♘d6 18 h5 ♘f6 19 ♗f3 ♖c8 20 bxa5 bxa5 21 ♖c1 ♕d7 22 ♔e2 ♖b8 23 ♕d1 ♖fc8 and Black was OK.

Conclusion: Black gets sufficient counterplay after 4 gxf3 g6 though the positions can become quite sharp.

A2)

4 exf3 *(D)*

B



As White's strong centre might just be an obstacle for his bishops, 4 exf3, immediately opening the f1-a6 diagonal for his bishop, is more logical.

4...g6

Black's most natural plan is to place his bishop on the long diagonal, and develop. Sometimes the moves ...♘h6-f5 and ...♘c6 offer some chances to attack the d4-pawn.

4...e6 is less flexible: 5 ♘c3 (5 ♕b3 ♕c8 6 d5 e5 7 f4 ♘d7 8 ♗e2 ♘gf6 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 ♘c3 0-0 11 ♗e3 a5 12 ♖ad1 exf4 13 ♗xf4 ♘c5 14 ♕c2 ♘fd7 15 ♖fe1 ♕d8 16 ♘b5 ♗f6 17 b3 ♖e8 = Gavrikov-Miles, Horgen 1994) 5...♘d7 6 ♗d3 g6 7 h4! ♗g7 8 ♗e3 ♘e7 9 h5 ♘f5 10 ♗xf5 gxf5 11 g4! fxg4 12 fxg4 ♕e7 13 h6 ♗f6 14 ♕f3 ± Sokolov-Miles, Groningen 1994.

5 ♘c3 ♗g7 6 ♗e3

6 ♗e2 allows Black to become active:

a) 6...♘c6 7 d5 ♘d4 8 0-0 ♘xe2+ 9 ♕xe2 ♗xc3 10 bxc3 ♕d7 11 ♖e1 ♔f8 with an unusual position in which the chances should be about equal, Grabarczyk-Tella, Stockholm 2000.

b) 6...♘d7 7 f4 c5 8 dxc5 ♘xc5 9 ♗e3 ♗xc3+ 10 bxc3 ♘f6 11 ♗d4 0-0 12 ♗xf6 ½-½ Sosonko-Van der Wiel, Rotterdam 1997.

c) 6...♘h6! 7 0-0 ♘f5 8 d5 0-0 9 ♗d2 c6 10 ♗d3 ♕d7 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 ♖b1 ♘a6 13 b4 ♘c7 14 ♗e4 cxd5 15 cxd5 ♖ac8 16 ♖c1 ♘a8 17 a4 ♘b6 18 a5 ♘c4 ∓ L.Spassov-Solozhenkin, Berga 1993.

6...♘f6

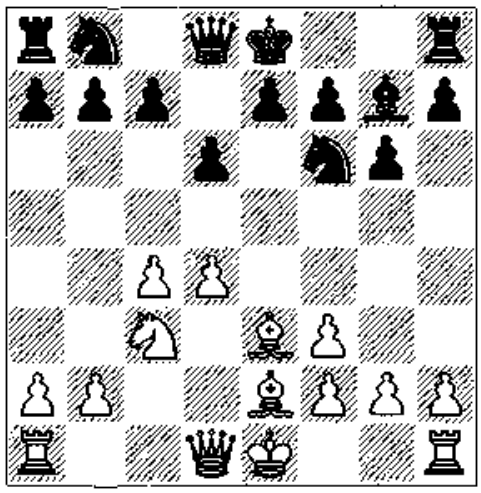
Alternatives:

a) Standard development by means of 6...♘d7 7 ♕d2 ♘gf6 is somewhat careless. White gets the better chances by 8 d5! c6 9 ♗e2 ♖c8 10 0-0 cxd5 11 cxd5 0-0 12 a4 ♕a5 13 ♖a3 a6 (Van der Sterren-Plaskett, London Lloyds Bank 1993) 14 ♖b3 with some pressure.

b) 6...♘h6!?, with the very concrete plan of attacking d4, is also worth considering here: 7 ♕b3 ♕c8 8 d5 ♘f5 9 ♗e2 c5 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♕c2 ♘d7 12 ♖ae1 ♖e8 13 ♗d3 ♘e5 14 f4 ♘xd3 15 ♕xd3 a6 16 ♖e2 ♕d7 17 ♖fe1 b5 ∓ Vaillant-Frick, Avoine 2000.

7 ♗e2 *(D)*

B



7...c6

7...0-0?! is premature, as White can start a kingside attack with 8 f4 (8 0-0 ♘bd7 9 ♖c1 e5 10 dxe5 ♘xe5 11 f4 ♘c6 12 ♗f3 ♕d7 13 c5 ♖ad8 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 ♘b5 ♖fe8 16 h3 d5 17 a4 ♘e4 18 ♘xa7 ♗xb2 19 ♖c2 ♗g7 20 ♘xc6 bxc6 21 ♗b6 ♖b8 22 a5 ± Petursson-Hodgson, London 1979) 8...c6 9 h4 ♕a5 10 ♔f1 e5 11 h5 ♘bd7 12 hxg6 fxg6 13 fxe5 dxe5 14 d5 e4 15 ♕d2 cxd5 16 cxd5 ♕b4 17 ♖h4 ♖ad8 18 ♖d1 ♘b6 19 ♘xe4 ♕xd2 20 ♖xd2 ♖xd5 21 ♘c5 ♖c8 22 b4 ♖xd2 23 ♗xd2 ♘bd5 24 ♖c4 ± Vaganian-Milos, Moscow OL 1994.

8 0-0 0-0 9 d5 ♘bd7 10 ♕b3

Other moves:

a) 10 f4 is logical, and may offer White a slight advantage:

a1) 10...♕a5 11 ♖b1! ♖fc8 12 b4 ♕c7 13 ♖c1 a5 14 dxc6 bxc6 15 b5 c5

16 ♗f3 is much better for White, Van der Sterren-Jansa, Prague 1992.

a2) 10...a6!? 11 ♖c1 cxd5 12 cxd5 b5 13 a4 b4 14 ♘a2 a5 15 ♗b5 ♘e4 16 ♗d4 ♗xd4 17 ♕xd4 ♘ec5 18 ♖ce1 ♘b6 19 f5! and despite Shariyazdanov-Spangenberg, Roque Saenz Pena 1997 being agreed drawn immediately, the position is very unclear.

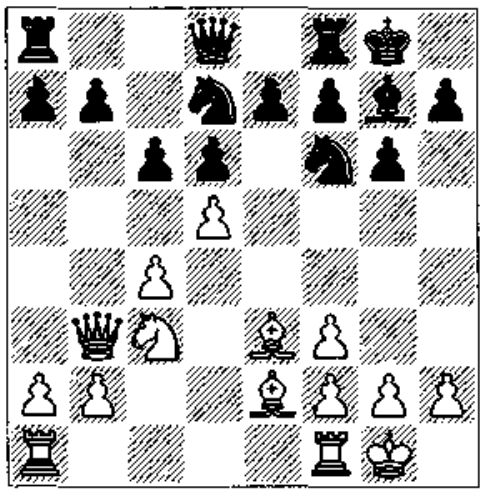
a3) 10...cxd5 11 cxd5 (11 ♘xd5 ♘c5 12 ♘c3 ♘fe4 13 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 14 ♗f3 ♘c5 15 ♖b1 a5 16 b3 ♕c7 17 h4 e6 18 h5 ♖fd8 = Sorokin-Spangenberg, Villa Gesell 1996) 11...♕a5 12 a3 ♖fc8 13 ♗d4 ♘e8 14 ♗xg7 (14 ♗g4 f5 15 ♗f3 ♗xd4 16 ♕xd4 ♕b6 17 ♕d2 ♘ef6 18 ♖ae1 ♔f8 19 ♖e3 ♘g8 20 ♘e2 ♘c5 21 b4 ♘d7 22 ♘d4 ± Farago-Davies, Silkeborg 1988) 14...♘xg7 15 ♗g4 f5 16 ♗f3 ♖xc3!? 17 bxc3 ♕xc3 18 ♖e1 ♕f6 19 ♖e3 ♘c5 20 ♖b1 ♖c8 21 ♕e2 ♖c7 22 ♖e1 ♔f8 23 g4!? fxg4 24 ♗xg4 ♘f5 25 ♗xf5 gxf5 (Naumkin-Jansa, Namestovo 1987) 26 f3 gives White some advantage.

b) 10 ♖b1!? is also a logical move: 10...♘b6 (10...a5!? is an improvement) 11 ♕d2 cxd5 12 cxd5 ♕d7 13 ♗b5 ♕f5 14 ♖fd1 ♖fc8 15 ♗xb6 axb6 16 ♕e3 ± Benković-Jović, Kragujevac 2000.

c) 10 ♖c1!? is possible; for example, 10...♕a5 11 dxc6 (11 ♖e1 cxd5 12 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 13 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 14 cxd5 ♖fc8 15 b3 a6 16 a4 ♗c3 17 ♖ed1 ♖c7 18 f4 ♖ac8 19 g3 ♗a5 20 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 21 ♗c4 ♗b6 22 ♗d2 a5 23 ♔f1 ♘c5 24 ♖a1 ♘e4 25 ♗e1 ♗d4 26 ♖d1 ♗c3 ∓ Stern-Slobodjan, Heringsdorf 2000) 11...bxc6 12 f4 ♖ab8 13 b3 ♘c5 14 ♗f3 ♖bc8 15 ♖e1 ♘e6 16 ♕d2 ♖fd8 17 ♖ed1 ♖d7 18 g4 ♔f8 19 ♘a4 ½-½ Bukal-Medak, Pula 2000.

We now return to the position after 10 ♕b3 *(D)*:

B



10...♕b8!?

This is the latest try from a top-level grandmaster game, and Black managed to hold, though he faced some difficulties. The game, however, is a model example of the positions arising in this variation. Older moves:

a) 10...cxd5?! is not good, opening the queenside to White's advantage: 11 cxd5 ♕b8 (11...♕a5 12 a3 a6 13 ♖ac1 ♖ac8 14 ♕xb7 ♖b8 15 ♕xa6 ♕xa6 16 ♗xa6 ♖xb2 17 a4 ♘c5 18 ♗b5 ± Bacrot-Markotić, Nice 1994) 12 ♖fc1 ♖c8 13 f4 a6 14 a4 b6 15 ♗f3 ♘c5 16 ♕d1 ♖a7 17 b4 ♘cd7 18 ♘e2 ♖ac7 19 ♘d4 ♕b7 20 ♘c6 ± Stohl-Přibyl, Bundesliga 1993/4.

b) 10...♕c7 is also quite slow, and White has a normal advantage after 11 ♖fd1 (11 ♖ac1 e6 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 ♖fd1 ♕b8 14 f4 d5 ½-½ Gagarin-Rashkovsky, Zadar 2000) 11...a6 12

♖ac1 ♖fc8 13 f4 ± Kharitonov-Agrest, Pinsk 1993.

11 ♖fd1 ♖c8 12 ♖ac1 a6 13 ♖d2 cxd5 14 ♘xd5

14 cxd5 b5 gives Black counterplay.

14...♘xd5 15 ♖xd5 ♖c6 16 f4 ♕c7 17 ♖dd1 a5 18 ♗f3 ♘c5 19 ♕c2 ♖b6 20 ♖b1 a4 21 h4 e6

21...♖b4!? might be possible.

22 h5

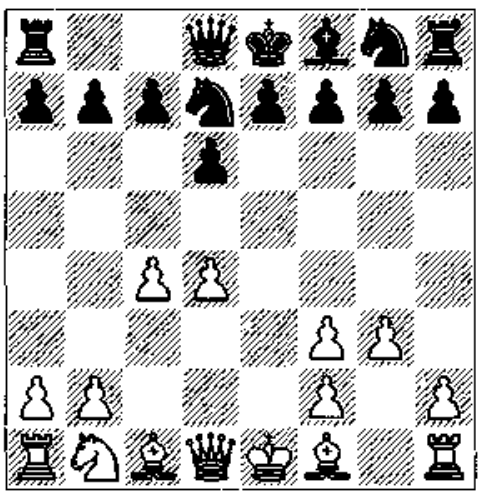
± Gelfand-Ivanchuk, Belgrade 1997. White's bishops have found some diagonals, and together with his stable position, they grant White some advantage. Black has good chances to defend, and in some lines also of active counterplay.

Conclusion: 4 exf3 offers White some positional advantage, although Black usually has a stable and playable position. Some new ideas, connected with the plan ...♘h6-f5, are our recommendation for Black.

B)

3...♘d7 4 g3 ♗xf3 5 exf3 *(D)*

B



5...g6

With the knight on d7, Black's main plan is to challenge White's centre with a pawn-push, either ...e5 or ...c5.

5...e6 is another move:

a) 6 f4 ♘b6 7 ♘c3 ♘f6 8 a4 a5 9 ♗g2 ♖b8 10 ♕e2 ♗e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 b3 d5 13 c5 ♘c8 14 f5 exf5 15 ♕e5 b6! leaves the result totally open, though D.Gurevich-Benjamin, Chicago 1991 ended after 16 ♕xf5 bxc5 17 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 18 ♗xd5 ♗f6 19 ♗c4 ♗xd4 20 ♗g5 ½-½.

b) 6 d5 e5 7 ♘c3 g6 8 f4 ♗g7 9 fxe5 ♘xe5 10 ♗h3 ♘f6 11 0-0 0-0 12 b3 ♘fd7 13 ♗d2 ♘c5 14 ♖b1 a5 15 ♗g2 ♖e8 16 ♘b5 ♘ed3 17 ♗e3 ♕d7 18 ♕d2 b6 19 ♖fd1 ½-½ Pieniazek-Maiwald, Bundesliga 1996/7.

c) 6 ♘c3 and now:

c1) After 6...c6 White gets activity in the centre with 7 d5! exd5 8 cxd5 ♘gf6 9 ♗f4 ♘e5 (9...c5!? Greenfeld) 10 ♗g2 ♗e7 11 ♗xe5 dxe5 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 f4 ♕c7 14 0-0! exf4 15 ♘b5 ♕b6 16 ♘d6+ ± Greenfeld-Sokolovs, Baile Herculane ECC 1994.

c2) 6...♘gf6 7 d5 e5 and now White can always attack the centre with f4, though Black also has a safe position: 8 ♗g2 g6 9 0-0 ♗g7 10 f4 0-0 11 fxe5 ♘xe5 12 b3 ♘fd7 13 ♕c2 ♕f6 14 ♗b2 ♘f3+ 15 ♔h1 ♖fe8 16 ♕d1 ♘de5 17 ♘b5 ♖e7 18 ♗xf3 ♕xf3+ 19 ♕xf3 ♘xf3 20 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 21 ♔g2 ♘e5 22 ♖fe1 a6 23 ♘c3 ♖ae8 with an equal position, Gunawan-Hodgson, Jakarta 1996.

6 ♗g2

Or:

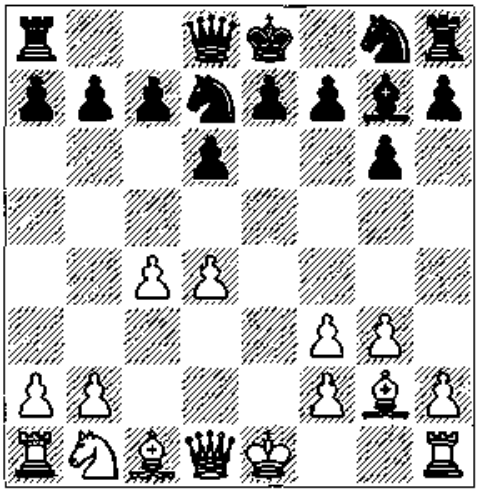
a) 6 ♘c3 ♗g7 and now:

a1) 7 h4 ♘gf6 8 ♗e3 c6 9 g4 h6 10 ♗e2 d5! 11 cxd5 ♘xd5 12 ♘xd5 cxd5 13 ♕b3 (the alternative 13 f4 ♕b6 14 h5 gxh5 15 ♖xh5 ♘f6 16 ♖h3 has been suggested as an improvement by Dautov) 13...♕b6 14 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 = Dautov-Adams, Ter Apel 1995.

a2) 7 ♗e3 c6 8 ♗e2 ♘gf6 allows White to get some space in the centre with 9 d5! 0-0 10 0-0 ♕a5 11 ♕b3 ♖fc8 12 ♖fd1 ♖ab8 13 a3 a6 14 ♖ac1 cxd5 15 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 16 ♖xd5 ♕c7 17 ♕a2 ± Pieniazek-Hennings, 2nd Bundesliga 1998/9.

b) 6 ♗h3 is an interesting idea, to maximize the effect of the bishop: 6...♗g7 7 0-0 ♘gf6 8 d5 0-0 9 ♘c3 c6 10 ♗e3 ♕a5 11 ♕b3 ♖ab8 12 ♖fd1!? (12 ♖ad1 ♘b6 13 ♖fe1 ±) 12...♘b6 13 ♗f1 ♖fc8 14 ♗d2 ♘bd7 15 f4 ♕b6 16 ♖e1 ♔f8 17 ♕d1!? cxd5 18 cxd5 ♕xb2 19 ♖b1 ♕a3 20 ♖e3 with good compensation, Skomorokhin-Sakaev, St Petersburg 1996.

6...♗g7 *(D)*



7 0-0

White has many alternatives:

a) 7 ♘c3 e6 8 f4 c6 9 d5 exd5 10 cxd5 c5 with a complicated position: 11 f5 ♘e7 12 fxg6 hxg6 13 0-0 a6 14 ♖e1 ♔f8 15 ♘e4 ♕b6 16 h4 ♘e5 17 ♗g5 ♘f5 18 ♘f6 ♕xb2 19 ♖b1 ♕d4 (Tager-Miles, Bad Wörishofen 1989) 20 ♕xd4 ♘xd4 21 ♖xe5! dxe5 22 ♖xb7 with good compensation.

b) 7 d5 h5 8 0-0 ♘h6 9 ♘d2 (9 f4!? Gleizerov) 9...c5 10 ♗h3 ♘f5 11 ♗xf5 gxf5 12 f4 (12 ♕c2 e6 13 ♖e1 ♕f6 ∓) 12...h4 13 ♖e1 hxg3 14 hxg3 ♘f6 15 ♖b1 ♔f8 16 ♘f3 ♕d7 17 ♕d3 e6 is OK for Black, Gleizerov-Tunik, Voskresensk 1993.

c) 7 f4 c6 8 0-0 ♘gf6 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 d5 (10 ♖e1!?) and now:

c1) 10...♖c8 11 ♖e1 (11 ♗e3 ♕a5! provides Black with counterplay, Sokolov-Hickl, Nussloch 1996) 11...♖e8 12 ♗e3 ±.

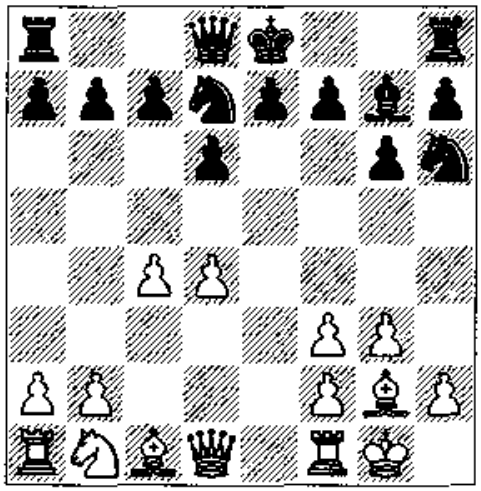
c2) 10...♘b6 11 ♕e2 cxd5 12 cxd5 ♖c8 13 ♗e3 ♘fd7 14 ♖ad1 ♗xc3 15 bxc3 ♖xc3 16 ♗d4 ♖c7 17 ♖fe1 ♘f6 18 ♗xb6 axb6 19 ♖d3 ♕d7 20 ♖e3 ♖e8 21 ♖b3 ♖ec8 22 ♕f1 ♕a4 23 ♖b2 ♕d4 ∓ Schöne-Maiwald, Bundesliga 1997/8.

7...♘h6! *(D)*

Black is going to bring his knight to f5, generating counterplay against the white centre.

7...c6 is another option, aiming to build a safe central set-up with ...c6 and ...d5: 8 ♘c3 ♘gf6 9 ♗e3 0-0 10 ♕d2 d5 11 ♕e2 dxc4 12 ♕xc4 e6 13 ♘e4 ♘d5 14 ♖ad1 ♕b6 15 ♗c1 a5 16 ♖fe1 ♕b4 17 ♗f1 ♖fd8 18 ♗g5 ♖db8 19 b3 a4 ∓ Born-Bagirov, Deizisau 1999.

8 ♗xh6



Or:

a) After 8 f4 Black has a choice:

a1) 8...c6 9 ♘c3 (9 g4 ♕b6 10 ♗e3 f5 and 9 d5 cxd5 10 cxd5 ♘f5 11 ♘c3 are other unclear suggestions by Ivanchuk) 9...♘f5 10 d5 c5 11 ♖e1 0-0 12 ♖b1 ♖e8 13 ♕d3 ♘d4 and the central knight gives Black counterchances, Lopushnoi-Khakhinov, Novosibirsk 1998.

a2) 8...♘f5! gives Black good activity after 9 ♗xb7 ♖b8 10 ♗g2 ♘xd4 11 ♘c3 0-0 12 ♖b1, and now:

a21) 12...c5 13 ♗d2 ♘b6 14 b3 e6 15 ♖e1 d5?! (15...♕c7!? Gofshtein) 16 cxd5 exd5 17 a4 a5 18 ♘e2 ♘c6 19 f5! ♘b4 20 ♘f4 ± Gofshtein-Jansa, Prague 1993.

a22) 12...c6 13 b3 ♕c7 14 ♗b2 ♘c5 = Ivanchuk-Speelman, Debrecen Echt 1992.

b) 8 g4!? stops ...♘f5, but White's pawn-structure is very committed. After 8...0-0 9 ♗e3 f5 10 ♕d2 ♘f7 11 h3 e5 12 dxe5 ♘dxe5 13 ♘a3 f4 14 ♗xf4 ♕f6 15 b3 g5 16 ♗g3 ♘g6 17 ♖ad1 ♘fe5 Black has good compensation, Klebel-Mirschinka, Bundesliga 1997/8.

8...♗xh6 9 f4

Here is a thematic example of how Black can gain the advantage: 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 f4 c6 11 ♖e1 ♗g7 12 d5 cxd5 13 ♘xd5 e6 14 ♘c3 ♗xc3! 15 bxc3 ♕c7 16 h4 ♖ad8 17 ♕d4 b6 ∓ Brenninkmeijer-Hodgson, Dutch Cht (Breda) 1998.

9...c6 10 ♘c3 ♗g7 11 ♕d2 0-0 12 d5

12 ♖fe1 e6 13 d5 cxd5 14 cxd5 e5 is OK for Black: 15 ♘e4 exf4 16 ♘xd6 ♘e5 17 ♘xb7 ♕b6 18 gxf4 ♘g4 19 ♖ad1, Heim-Hodgson, Slough ECC 1997.

12...♖c8 13 ♖ac1 ♕a5 14 ♖fd1 ♖fe8 15 b3 ♖c7 16 h4 ♗xc3 17 ♕xc3 ♕xc3 18 ♖xc3 cxd5 19 ♖xd5 ♘f6 20 ♖b5 b6

= Temirbaev-Adams, Elista OL 1998. The position is balanced, since White's bishop is a plus, but the doubled pawns are a clear minus in an endgame.

Conclusion: 3 c4 ♘d7 4 g3 ♗xf3 5 exf3 g6 seems to be completely sound for Black. Again, the plans with ...♘h6 work well.

C)

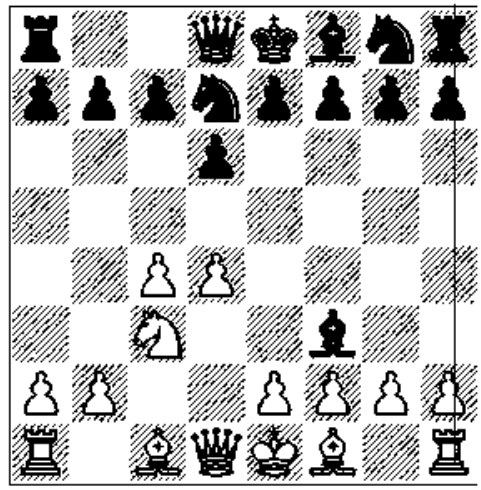
3...♘d7 4 ♘c3 ♗xf3 *(D)*

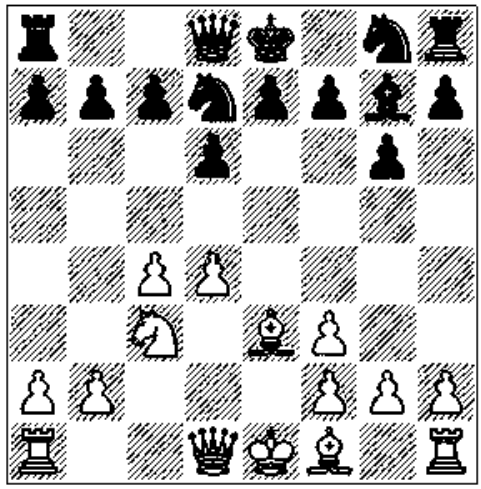
5 gxf3

5 exf3 leads to somewhat different positions after 5...g6:

a) 6 ♗e2 ♗g7 7 0-0 ♘h6! looks sound for Black, though complications are possible:

a1) 8 d5 ♘f5 9 ♗d3 ♘d4 10 ♖e1 0-0 11 ♗g5 ♖e8 12 f4 ♘c5 13 ♘e2 ½-½ Lautier-Hodgson, Harplinge 1998.





a2) 8 ♗d3 e6 9 ♗e3 0-0 10 ♕d2 ♘f5 11 ♗xf5 exf5 12 ♗g5 ♗f6 13 h4 c6 14 ♖fe1 ♖e8 is equal, Vyzhmanavin-Hodgson, London ECC 1996.

a3) 8 g4!? e6 (8...e5!?) 9 ♗e3 f5 10 ♖e1 0-0 11 g5 ♘f7 12 f4 c6 13 ♕d2 ♕c7 14 ♖ad1 ♖ad8 15 h4 ♖fe8 = Eperjesi-Bree, Budapest 2000.

b) 6 f4 ♗g7 and then:

b1) 7 ♗e3 e6 8 ♕b3 ♘e7 9 0-0-0 b6 10 g4 ♘f6 11 ♖g1 d5 12 cxd5 ♘fxd5 13 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 14 ♗c4 ♕c6 15 ♔b1 0-0 ∓ Samarin-Belikov, Smolensk 1992.

b2) 7 ♗e2 ♘h6 8 g4 e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 fxe5 ♘xe5 11 ♕xd8+ ♖xd8 12 ♗xh6 ♗xh6 13 ♖d1 c6 ∓ Gleizerov-Epishin, Podolsk 1992.

b3) 7 g4!? is an interesting sharp idea, which made Black react wrongly with 7...e5?! (7...c5!? and 7...h5!? look like natural improvements) 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♗g2 ♘e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♗xb7 ♖b8 12 ♗g2 exf4 13 ♗xf4 ♖xb2 14 ♘b5 ♘e5 15 ♖e1 ♘xc4 16 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 17 ♘xc7 ± in Garcia Ilundain-Mellado, Spanish Cht 1992.

c) 6 ♗e3 ♗g7 *(D)* and now:

c1) 7 ♕d2 is best met by the standard set-up 7...e6! 8 ♗d3 ♘e7, when Black is doing fine; for example, 9 0-0 (9 h4 h5 10 d5 e5 11 f4 ♘f5!? 12 ♗xf5 gxf5 13 ♘e2 exf4 14 ♗xf4 ♘c5 with counterplay, Itkis-Nevednichy, Kishinev 1993) 9...0-0 10 ♗h6 ♗xh6 11 ♕xh6 ♘f5 12 ♗xf5 exf5 13 ♕d2 ♖e8 = Ovseevich-Borsos, Simferopol 1991.

c2) After 7 h4 h5 the position may become quite complicated, although Black's plan with ...♘h6-f5 appears very natural:

c21) 8 g3 ♘h6 9 ♗h3 c6 10 0-0 ♘f5 11 ♗xf5 gxf5 12 ♗g5 ♘f8 13 ♖e1 ♘g6 14 ♘e2 ♕d7 15 ♘f4 e6 16 ♘xg6 fxg6 17 d5 e5 = Eingorn-Agrest, Berlin 1993.

c22) 8 ♕d2 ♘h6 9 ♗d3 c5 10 dxc5 ♘xc5 11 ♗c2 ♘f5 12 ♗xf5 gxf5 13 ♗d4 ♗xd4 14 ♕xd4 ♖g8 15 0-0-0 ♘e6 16 ♕d5 ♕b6 with good activity, Pogorelov-Izeta, Linares open 1995.

c23) 8 ♖c1 ♘h6 9 g4 hxg4 10 fxg4 f5 11 ♗e2 ♘xg4 12 ♗xg4 fxg4 13 ♕xg4 ♘f8 14 ♕e4 c6 15 ♔d2 ½-½ Komarov-Hodgson, French Cht 1999.

5...g6 6 f4

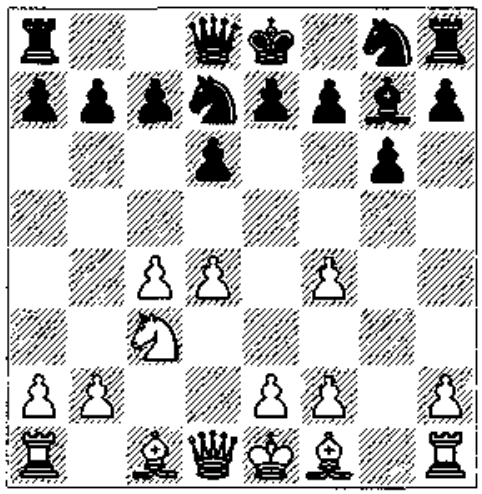
The alternatives are not dangerous for Black:

a) 6 b3 ♗g7 7 ♗b2 ♘gf6 8 e3 0-0 9 f4 e5 10 fxe5 dxe5 11 ♗g2 exd4 12 ♕xd4 c6 13 ♕d2 ♕a5 14 ♘e4 ♕xd2+ 15 ♘xd2 ♖ad8 16 ♖d1 ♘c5 17 ♔e2 ♖fe8 = Vladimirov-Rivas, Salamanca 1991.

b) 6 h4 ♘gf6 7 ♕b3 ♖b8 8 ♗e3 c6 9 ♗h3 ♗g7 10 0-0-0 and now 10...a6 allows 11 c5!? 0-0 12 ♗f4 e5 13 dxe5 ♘xc5 14 ♕c4 ♘h5 (Kirov-Delchev, Bulgarian Ch (Sofia) 1996) 15 exd6 ±. Probably Black should continue with 10...♕b6!?; e.g., 11 ♕a4 ♕a6.

6...♗g7 *(D)*

W



7 ♗g2

White has some alternatives:

a) 7 ♕d2 ♘h6 (7...c6 8 b3 ♕b6 9 e3 ♘h6 10 h4 e5 11 fxe5 dxe5 12 d5 ♘f6 13 ♗g2 ♘f5 14 ♗b2 0-0 15 0-0-0 ♖ad8, San Segundo-Epishin, Madrid 1992, 16 h5!? ♘xh5 17 ♖xh5 gxh5 18 ♖g1 with good compensation – Epishin) 8 b3 (8 e4 c5 9 d5 f5 =) 8...♘f5 9 e3 e5 10 fxe5 dxe5 11 d5 0-0 is unclear according to Epishin.

b) 7 e3 c6 8 ♗d2 e6 9 ♕b3 ♕c7 10 ♘e4 ♘df6? (10...b6!?) 11 ♕xb7! ♔d7 12 ♕xc7+ ♔xc7 13 ♘g5 is much better for White, Gomez Esteban-Romero, Elgoibar 1997.

7...c6!?

This logical move, blocking the long diagonal, seems to give Black excellent counterplay.

7...♖b8 is another option: 8 0-0 (8 ♕d3 ♘gf6 9 b3 0-0 10 ♗b2 a6 11 0-0 c5 12 e3 cxd4 13 ♕xd4 b5 14 cxb5 axb5 15 ♖fc1 b4 16 ♘a4 ♕a5 is OK for Black, Panno-Miles, Buenos Aires 1994) 8...e6 9 d5 ♘gf6 10 ♗e3 a6 11 ♕b3 e5 12 fxe5 ♘xe5 13 ♗a7 ♖a8 14 ♗d4 ♘h5 15 e3 0-0 16 ♕xb7 ♕e7 17 ♕b3 ♖fb8 18 ♕c2 ♘xc4 19 ♘e2 ♘e5 20 ♗c3 f5 21 ♖ae1 ♕h4 22 h3 ½-½ Sakaev-Svidler, St Petersburg 1997.

8 0-0 ♘h6 9 e4 0-0 10 ♗e3 e6 11 ♖c1 ♕h4

Black's pieces nicely attack the white position, and the strong-looking centre is not effective.

12 ♕f3 e5 13 fxe5 dxe5 14 d5 ♘g4 15 ♕h3 ♕xh3 16 ♗xh3 ♘xe3 17 fxe3 ♘c5

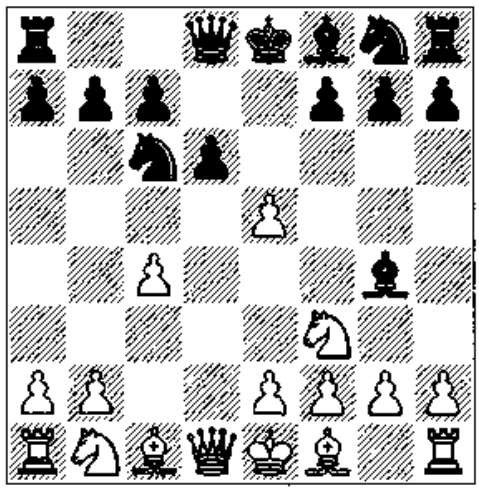
∓ Alterman-Hodgson, Bundesliga 1997/8.

Conclusion: Black should not be too worried about the strong white centre in the variation 4 ♘c3 ♗xf3 5 gxf3 g6 6 f4 as this centre might easily become a target for active counterplay by Black.

14 The Portuguese Gambit

1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 c4 e5 4 dxe5 ♘c6 *(D)*

W



This gambit has mostly been tried by some Portuguese players, and it is reminiscent of the notorious Hennig-Schara Gambit (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c5 4 cxd5 cxd4). Black sacrifices a pawn, but White will be behind in development for some time. This gambit is probably not completely correct, but it might be a good choice as a surprise weapon for a must-win situation. The gambit can also be applied in the move-order 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 ♗g4.

5 ♗g5!?

This *zwischenzug*, developing the bishop with tempo, seems to be the strongest, but there have only been a few examples. The alternatives for White are:

a) 5 h3?! ♗xf3 6 exf3 is not good, because Black plays for activity with 6...dxe5! (6...♘xe5 7 ♗e2 ± allows White to stabilize his advantage in the form of the bishop-pair) 7 ♕a4 ♗b4+ 8 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 9 ♘xd2 ♕d4 with advantage to Black.

b) 5 e6?! just gives away the pawn: 5...♗xe6 (5...fxe6 6 ♘c3 ♕d7 7 e4 ♗e7 8 ♗e2 0-0-0 9 ♗e3 h6 10 a3 ♗xf3 11 ♗xf3 ♗g5 12 ♕d2 ♗xe3 13 ♕xe3 e5 is also possible, Guerra-Charneira, Honra 1998) 6 e3 g6 7 ♗d2 ♗g7 8 ♗c3 ♘f6 9 ♘bd2 0-0 10 e4 ♕e7 11 ♗e2 ♗d7 12 ♕c2 ♖ae8 ∓ Silva-Leonardo, Portugal 1993.

c) 5 ♘c3 also gives the pawn back too easily. 5...dxe5 6 ♕a4 and then:

c1) 6...♗c5 7 ♗g5 (7 ♘xe5!? is another idea) 7...♘f6 8 ♖d1 ♗d7 9 ♕c2 0-0 10 e3 ± Pfaff-Blum, Baunatal 1999.

c2) 6...♗b4! 7 ♗d2 ♗xf3 8 exf3 ♕d4 with counterplay.

d) 5 exd6 is the most natural move. After 5...♗xd6 Black can expect some compensation in an unclear position:

d1) 6 e3 ♕e7 7 ♗e2 ♘f6 8 0-0 0-0-0 9 ♕a4 ♘e4 10 ♘bd2 f5 11 ♘xe4 fxe4 12 ♘d4 ♗xe2 13 ♘xe2 ♕e5 14 ♘g3 ♖he8 15 ♕b5 ♕e7 16 b3 ♗e5 17 ♖b1 a6 18 ♕a4 h5 19 b4 h4 20 b5 hxg3 21 bxc6 gxf2+ 22 ♖xf2 ♗xh2+! ∓ Durão-Charneira, Honra 1998.

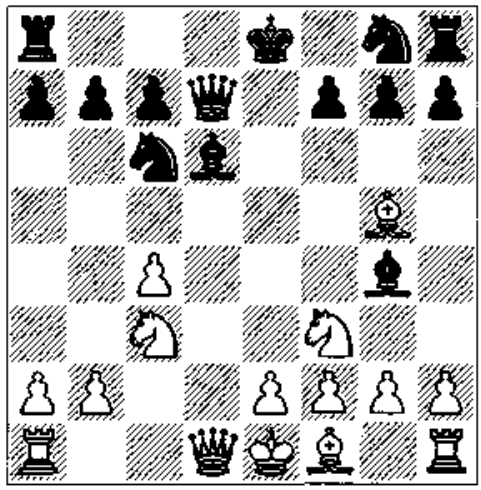
d2) 6 ♘bd2 ♕e7 7 e3 ♘f6 8 ♗e2 0-0-0 9 ♘d4 ♘xd4 10 ♗xg4+ ♔b8 11 ♗e2 ♘f5 12 ♕c2 ♘xe3 13 fxe3 ♕xe3 14 ♘f3? (14 ♕b3!? and 14 ♘b1!? are better) 14...♗b4+ 15 ♔f1 ♘g4! ∓ Damasceno-Charneira, Lisbon 1996.

d3) 6 ♘c3 ♘f6 7 e3 ♕e7 8 ♗e2 0-0-0 (8...♖d8 9 ♗d2 0-0 10 0-0 ♘e5 11 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 12 f4 ♕e6 13 ♗xg4 ♘xg4 14 ♕e2 ♗c5 15 ♘d5 f5 16 h3 c6 17 hxg4 cxd5 18 b4 ♗e7 19 gxf5 ♖xf5 20 c5 ♕h6 21 g4 ♕g6 22 ♕g2 ± Van Wely-Damaso, Strasbourg 1994) 9 ♕b3 (9 ♕a4 ♔b8 10 a3 h5 11 ♗d2 ♖he8 12 ♘b5 ♘e4 13 ♖d1 ♗c5 14 ♖f1?? ♘xd2 15 ♘xd2 ♗xe2 0-1 Quaresma-Vitor, Odivelas 1995) 9...♘e4 10 0-0 with a basic position-type of this variation. Black gets compensation by playing very aggressively: 10...h5 11 ♘b5 ♗c5 12 a3 a6 13 ♘c3 ♗d6 14 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 15 c5 ♗xc5 16 ♕xf7 ♗d6 17 ♕c4 ♕e7 18 h3 ♗xf3 19 ♗xf3 ♘e5 20 ♕e4 ♘xf3+ 21 ♕xf3 g5 and despite the simplifications Black had activity in Kaabi-Rocha, Algarve 1995.

5...♕d7 6 exd6

6 ♘c3 ♗xf3 7 exf3 ♘xe5 8 ♗e2 ♗e7 9 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 ½-½ Tella-Ribeiro, Athens 1997.

6...♗xd6 7 ♘c3 *(D)*



B

7...♘ge7

Or:

a) 7...h6?! doesn't seem to have much of an idea behind it: 8 ♗h4 f5 9 c5 ♗xc5 10 ♕xd7+ ♔xd7 11 0-0-0+ ♔c8 12 e3 ♘ge7 13 ♗c4 a6 14 ♗g3 b5 15 ♗e6+ ♔b7 16 ♖d7 ♖ac8 17 ♘e5 ♗h5 18 ♘d5 ♖he8 (Santos-Rocha, Portuguese Cht (Evora) 1995/6) and now 19 ♘xc6 wins.

b) The unnatural 7...♕f5?! is not good: 8 ♕d5 ♕g6 (8...♕d7 9 ♘d4 ♘ge7 10 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 11 ♕e4 0-0-0 12 0-0-0 a6 13 g3 c5 14 ♘b3 f5 15 ♕c2 ♕e6 16 ♗g2 ± Perez-Ribeiro, Matanzas 1995) 9 ♕e4+ ♕xe4 10 ♘xe4 ♗b4+ 11 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12 ♔xd2 0-0-0+ 13 ♔c3 f5 14 ♘eg5 ♖d7 15 h3 ♗h5 16 g4 h6 17 gxh5 hxg5 18 ♘xg5 ♖xh5 19 ♘e6 ♘f6 20 ♗g2 ± Arlandi-Rocha, Pula Echt 1997. Black should keep more pieces on the board.

c) The so far untested move 7...f6!? might be worth a try, as there seem to be some problems in the main line.

8 e3 *(D)*

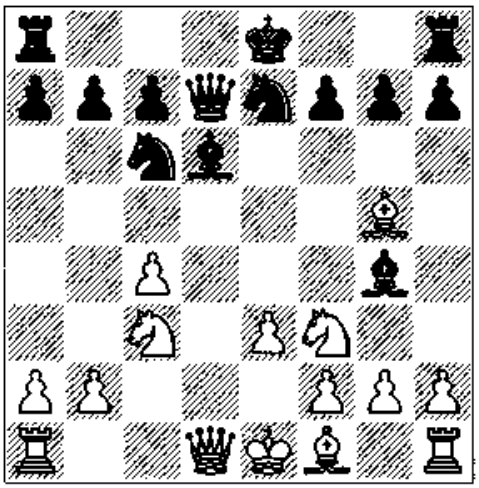
8 ♕a4!?.

Now (after 8 e3):

a) 8...♘g6 (the tactical operation started by this move does not work) 9 h3 ♗xf3 (9...♗e6 10 e4 ±) 10 ♕xf3 h6 11 0-0-0! hxg5 12 c5 ♘ge5 13 ♕e2 (13 ♕e4 ♖h4! gives Black counterplay) 13...0-0-0 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 f4 ± Tella-Conquest, Stockholm Rilton Cup 1998/9.

b) 8...0-0-0 deserves a closer look. Black's activity has led to some success

B



in practice, though objectively it looks quite speculative. 9 ♗e2 f6 10 ♗h4 ♔b8 (10...h5 11 ♗g3 ♕e6 12 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 13 ♕a4 ♗xf3 14 ♗xf3 ♘e5 15 ♗e2 ♘g4 16 c5 ♖dd8 17 ♕xa7 c6 18 ♕a8+ ♔c7 19 ♕a4 ♘d5 20 ♕e4 ♕f7 21 ♘xd5+ ♕xd5 22 ♕xd5 ♖xd5 23 b4 ± Arlandi-Ribeiro, Athens rpd 1997) and now:

b1) 11 ♕a4 g5 12 ♗g3? (12 0-0-0! is an improvement, with White claiming an advantage after 12...gxh4 13 c5 h3 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 g3) 12...♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♗xg3 14 ♖d1 ♗xf2+ 15 ♔xf2 ♕f5 16 g4 ♕e5 17 ♕b5 ♖xd1 18 ♗xd1 ♖d8 19 ♕xe5 ♘xe5 ∓ Pereira-Damaso, Lisbon 1995.

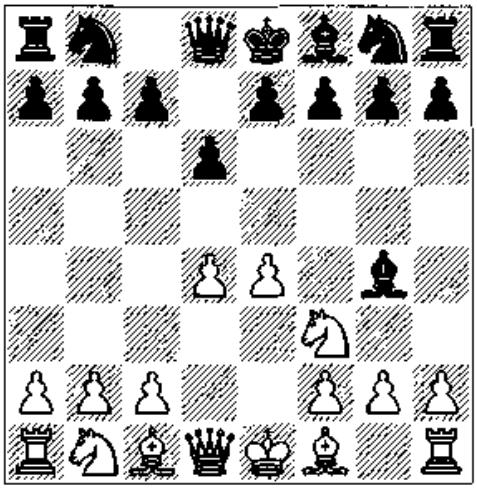
b2) 11 ♗g3!? ± is best, although Black might still have some chances of complicating the position.

Conclusion: The gambit is probably not completely sound, but as a surprise weapon it might be a reasonable choice.

15 3 e4

1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 e4 *(D)*

B



This move leads to rather different position-types from 3 c4. It is more like a semi-open system because generally White leaves the c-pawn on c2 and plays ♘c3 early on. Lines B1 and B21 are rather positional and don't cause any major danger to Black's life. Typically Black aims for a well-timed ...d5 after which the position either simplifies or after White plays e5 there arises a French-type position where Black has put his bad bishop outside the pawn-chain, which, in itself at least, is highly beneficial for him. In Line B212 White manages first to push d5, which is slightly more dangerous for Black. The real test for the black system is the complicated Line B22, where White attempts to put the bishop in trouble with the plan of h3, g4 and h4, and sometimes aims to castle queenside.

Here we discuss:

A: 3...♘d7!? 122
B: 3...♘f6 123

The latter is very much the main line.

A)

3...♘d7!?

This is a rare move with some practical value. It will be some kind of Philidor where Black has got the bishop out. One may think that this fact is in Black's favour, but sometimes the bishop gets in trouble or has to be exchanged for the knight.

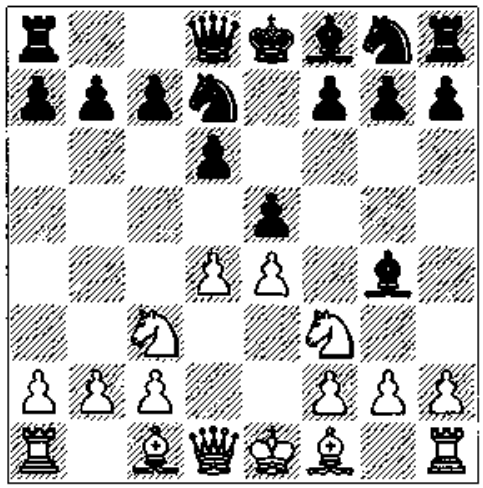
4 ♘c3

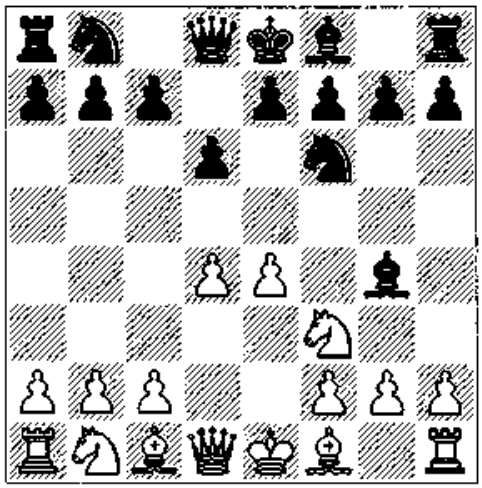
Both 4 h3 ♗h5 5 ♘c3 e5 6 ♗e3 ♗e7 7 ♗e2 ♘gf6 8 0-0 0-0 9 a4 c6 10 a5 ♕c7 11 ♖e1 ♖fe8 12 ♘d2 ♗xe2 13 ♖xe2 b5 14 axb6 axb6 15 ♘b3 b5 = Demina-Ionov, Moscow 1991 and 4 ♗e2 e5 lead to a similar sort of position.

4...e5 *(D)*

5 ♗c4

White obtained a slight initiative in R.Schulz-Belikov, Berlin 1994 with the apparently tamer 5 ♗e2 ♘gf6 6 0-0 ♗e7 7 ♗e3 0-0 8 ♘d2 ♗xe2 9 ♕xe2 c6 10 a4 ♖e8 11 ♖ad1 ♗f8 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♘c4 ♖e6 14 ♖d3 ♕c7 15





♗g5 ♗c5 16 ♘e3 g6 17 ♘g4 ♘xg4 18 ♕xg4 ♗e7 ±.

5...c6 6 ♗e3

With 6 a4 exd4 7 ♕xd4 ♗xf3 8 gxf3 White takes a big risk.

6...b5 7 ♗e2 ♘gf6 8 ♘d2 ♗xe2 9 ♕xe2 a6 10 f4 ♗e7 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 f5 ♗c5 13 0-0 ♗xe3+ 14 ♕xe3 ♕b6 = 15 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 16 ♘f3 ♘fd7 17 b3 f6

There is no reason why Black should lose this ending, although he in fact did so in Khalifman-Belikov, Russian Cht (Podolsk) 1992.

Conclusion: If Black dislikes the complexities of Line B, he may consider this cautious possibility but White is likely to get some spatial advantage.

B)

3...♘f6 *(D)*

Now:

B1: 4 ♗d3 123
B2: 4 ♘c3 125

4 ♘bd2 e6 usually transposes to Line B1 by 5 ♗d3 or 5 c3 ♗e7 6 ♗d3.

B1)

4 ♗d3 e6 5 ♘bd2

Or:

a) 5 0-0 is a natural move, but it is not very dangerous:

a1) After 5...d5!? 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 it is better to play 7 c3 = than to go for a closed position with 7 e5?! ♘fd7 8 ♖e1 c5 since the attempt to complicate with 9 c4!? (9 c3 ♘c6 is positionally fine for Black) 9...dxc4 10 ♘xc4 cxd4 11 ♖e4 ♗h5 12 ♗e2?! d3 13 ♕xd3 ♗g6 ∓ led to the loss of an exchange in Åkesson-Karpachev, Jyväskylä 1996.

a2) After 5...♗e7 White has:

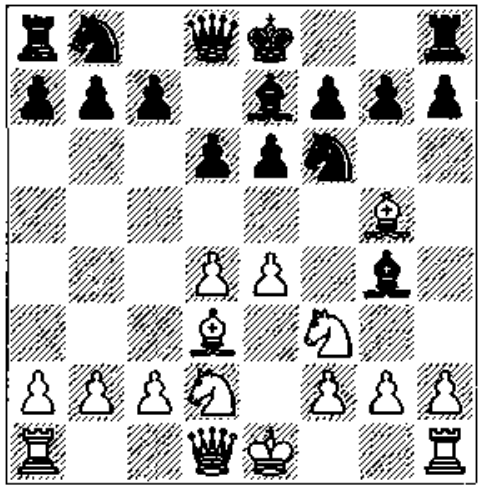
a21) 6 ♖e1 c6 7 ♘bd2 d5 8 e5 (White should play 8 c3 = or 8 exd5 cxd5 =) 8...♘fd7 9 c3 c5 (this may already be slightly unpleasant for White) 10 ♕a4 (10 ♘f1 cxd4 11 cxd4 ♘c6 ∓ 12 ♗e3 ♗b4) 10...♗h5 11 c4 ♘c6 12 cxd5 ♘b6 13 ♕b5 a6 14 ♕b3 ♘xd5 15 dxc5 ♗xc5 ∓ 16 ♘e4?! ♗b4 ∓ 17 ♗g5 ♕d7 18 ♖ed1? ♗xf3 19 gxf3 ♘d4 20 ♕c4 ♘xf3+ 0-1 Bagaturov-Ki.Georgiev, Biel IZ 1993.

a22) 6 c3 c6 7 ♘bd2 ♗h5 (7...d5 here or next move looks slightly more

accurate; there is no hurry to castle) 8 ♖e1 0-0 9 ♘f1 d5 10 exd5 cxd5 11 ♘g3 ♗g6 12 ♗xg6 hxg6 13 ♘e2 ♗d6 (13...♘c6 with the logical plan ...b5-b4 should be close to equality) 14 ♗f4 ♘c6 15 ♕d3 with a slight advantage for White, B.Schmidt-Bezold, Bundesliga 1994/5.

b) 5 ♗g5!? ♗e7 6 ♘bd2 *(D)* is another approach:

B



b1) 6...0-0?! (as is often the case in practice, Black castles too early) 7 c3 d5 8 e5 (8 exd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 ♕c2 ±) 8...♘fd7 9 ♗xe7 (the aggressive 9 h4! is interesting: 9...h6 10 ♗e3 c5 11 ♕b1 {threatening ♘h2} 11...♗xf3 12 ♘xf3 ♘c6 13 h5 cxd4 14 cxd4 ± Dautov) 9...♕xe7 and White has some initiative:

b11) 10 ♕c2 h6 11 ♕b3 ♘b6 12 a4 a5 (12...c5! 13 dxc5 ♕xc5 14 a5 ♘6d7 15 ♕xb7 ♗xf3 16 ♘xf3 ♘c6 17 ♕xd7 ♖fd8 18 ♕c7 ♖ac8 19 ♕b7 ♖b8 =) 13 h3 ♗xf3 14 ♘xf3 ♘8d7 15 0-0 c5 16 ♗e2?! (16 ♗b5 ±) 16...♖fc8 17 ♕a3 ♔f8 = Dautov-Tischbierek, Dortmund 1992.

b12) More accurate is 10 ♕b3! ♘b6 11 a4 a5 12 0-0 ♘8d7 13 ♕c2 ♗xf3 (13...h6 14 ♘e1! ± leaves the g4-bishop in trouble) 14 ♘xf3 h6 15 ♕e2 c5 16 ♗b5 ♖fc8 17 dxc5 ♘xc5 18 ♘d4 ± Dautov.

b2) It is the right time for 6...d5! 7 e5 (7 exd5 =) 7...♘fd7 8 ♗e3?! (8 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 9 0-0 c5 10 c3 ♘c6 =) 8...c5 9 c3 ♘c6 10 0-0 c4 11 ♗c2 b5 12 ♕b1 b4 13 cxb4 ♗xb4 14 h3 ♗h5 15 g4 ♗g6, which gave Black a nice position in Yuferov-Bliumberg, Minsk 1993.

5...♗e7 6 c3 *(D)*

White has also tried:

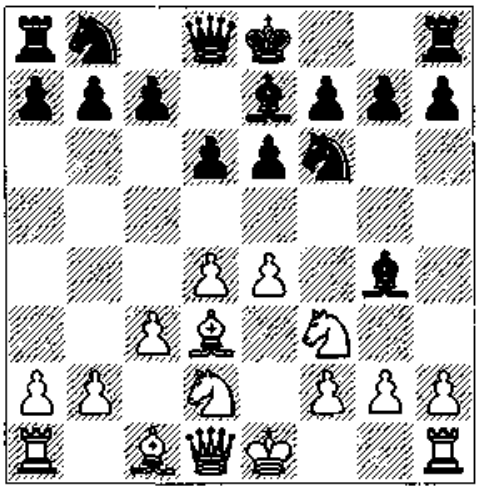
a) 6 ♘f1 0-0 (6...c5 7 dxc5 ♕a5+ 8 c3 ♕xc5 9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♕xf3 ♘bd7 11 ♕e2 0-0 12 ♘d2 ♘e5 13 ♗c2 ♖fc8 14 f4 ♘c4 15 ♘xc4 ♕xc4 16 ♗d3 ♕c6 17 0-0 ± Polugaevsky-Short, Reykjavik 1987) 7 ♘g3 c5! (White's slow approach invites this) 8 dxc5 dxc5 9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♕xf3 ♘c6 = 11 ♕d1?! ♕c7 12 c3 ♖fd8 13 ♕e2 ♗d6! 14 ♘f1 ♘e5 15 ♗c2 c4 gives Black a slight advantage, Dizdarević-Groszpeter, Zenica 1987.

b) 6 0-0 ♘bd7!? (6...c6 7 c3 transposes to note 'a22' to White's 5th move and may be preferable; 6...d5 7 c3 transposes to note 'b3' to Black's 6th move) 7 ♖e1 0-0 8 h3 ♗h5 9 ♘f1 ♗g6 10 ♘g3 ♘h5 11 ♘xh5 (11 ♘f5!? gains the bishop-pair) 11...♗xh5 12 c3 ♖e8 13 ♗e3 c6 14 ♕e2 ½-½ Andersson-Miles, Benasque 1995.

6...♗h5

This is a standard manoeuvre with the idea of exchanging light-squared bishops with ...♗g6. Other options:

B



a) The dangers of the tempting but premature 6...0-0?! were demonstrated by 7 ♕c2 h6?! (7...♔h8!?; 7...♘bd7) 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♘xf3 c5 10 dxc5 dxc5 11 e5 ♘d5 12 ♕e2 ♕d7 13 ♕e4 f5 14 exf6 ♘xf6 15 ♕g6 ± in W.Richter-Bezold, Bundesliga 1991/2.

b) The immediate 6...d5!? is thematic, but it allows White to complicate:

b1) 7 ♕a4+ c6 8 ♘e5 ♗h5 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 11 f4 dxe4 12 ♘xe4 0-0 13 ♕c2 ♗g6 = Nemet-Belotti, Elista OL 1998.

b2) 7 ♕b3!? ♗xf3 8 ♕xb7?! (8 gxf3!? leads to a position that is difficult to assess) 8...♗xg2 9 ♖g1 ♗xe4 10 ♗xe4 ♘bd7 11 ♗f3 0-0 12 ♘b3 ♕b8 13 ♕xb8 ♖axb8 14 ♗h6 ♘e8 ∓ Sarosy-Liebowitz, corr. 1990-2.

b3) 7 0-0 dxe4 8 ♘xe4 is safest:

b31) 8...♘xe4 9 ♗xe4 c6 10 ♕b3 ♕c7 (10...♕b6!?) 11 ♘e5! ♗h5 12 g3 ♘d7 13 ♗f4 ♕c8 14 ♘c4 ♘f6 15 ♗g2 ♗e2 16 ♖fe1 ♗xc4 17 ♕xc4 0-0 18 ♕b3 ♖d8 19 ♖ad1 ± Dizdar-Miljanić, Yugoslav Ch (Kladovo) 1990. White has a useful bishop-pair.

b32) 8...♘bd7 looks better: 9 ♘g3 0-0 (9...c5! =) 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 ♕xf3 c6 ± 12 ♕d1 ½-½ Lengyel-Sulskis, Budapest 1995.

7 ♘f1 ♗g6

Even here 7...d5!? seems to be quite OK: 8 e5 ♘fd7 9 ♘g3 ♗g6 10 ♗xg6 hxg6 11 ♕b3 ♘b6 12 a4 a5 13 ♗e3 ♘8d7 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♘d2 c5 16 dxc5 ♘xc5 ½-½ Dautov-Bezold, Altensteig 1994.

8 ♘g3 d5 9 exd5 ♗xd3 10 ♕xd3 ♕xd5 11 c4

11 0-0 c5 12 c4 ♕d7 looks OK for Black.

11...♕a5+ 12 ♗d2 ♕a6 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♖fe1 ♖d8 15 ♕e2 ♘c6 16 ♗c3

White enjoys a small space advantage. However, the next move offers some relief and Black doesn't suffer from any structural weaknesses.

16...♗b4! 17 ♗xb4 ♘xb4 18 a3 ♘c6 19 ♖ad1 h6

= Miles-Van der Wiel, Wijk aan Zee 1996. The game was drawn after 103 moves.

Conclusion: This system is not dangerous for Black, who can most likely equalize with a well-timed ...d5. However, Black should usually avoid castling prematurely.

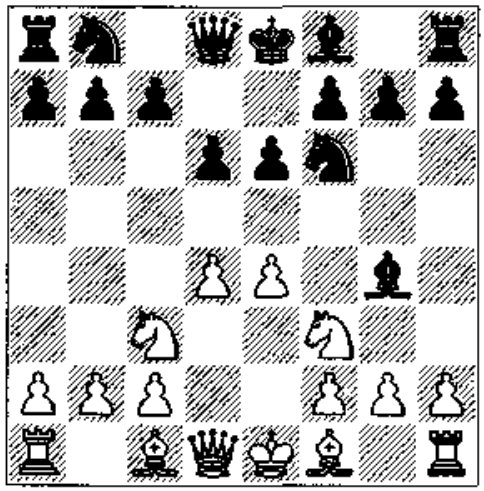
B2)

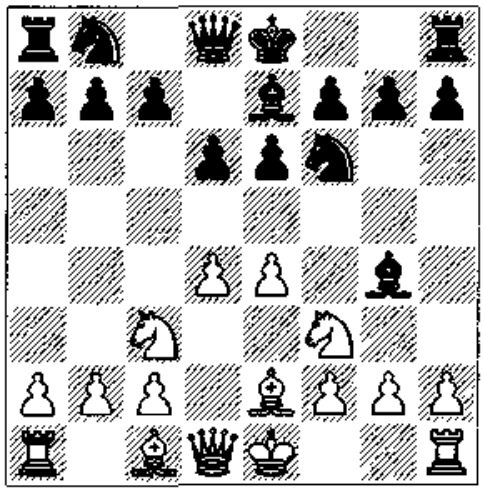
4 ♘c3 e6 *(D)*

Now:

B21: 5 ♗e2 126
B22: 5 h3 131

5 ♗e3 tends to reach similar positions to Line B21; e.g., 5...♗e7 6 h3





♗h5 7 ♗e2 d5 (7...0-0 transposes to the note to White's 7th move in Line B211) 8 ♘e5 ♗xe2 9 ♕xe2 c6 10 exd5 ♘xd5?! (10...exd5 =) 11 ♘xd5 exd5 12 ♕g4 0-0 13 ♗h6 ♗f6 14 0-0-0 ♕c8 15 ♕g3 ± Miladinović-Hébert, Montreal 2000.

B21)

5 ♗e2 ♗e7 *(D)*

It is too early for 5...d5?! 6 exd5 ♘xd5 (6...exd5 7 ♘e5 ♗xe2 8 ♕xe2 ♕e7 9 0-0 c6 10 ♖e1 ♕e6 11 ♗g5 ♗e7 12 ♗xf6 gxf6 13 ♕h5 fxe5 14 ♖xe5 ♕f6 15 ♖ae1 +− is even worse, Filippov-Kovaliov, Gistrup 1996) 7 ♘xd5 exd5 8 ♘e5! ♗e6 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 f4 0-0 11 ♗d3 f5 12 ♕e2 ± Filippov-Arkhangelsky, Moscow 1994.

Now (after 5...♗e7):

B211: 6 0-0 126
B212: 6 d5 129

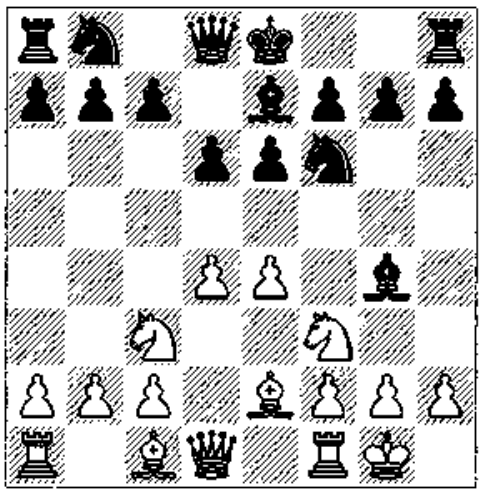
Or 6 ♗e3, and now:

a) 6...0-0 7 ♕d2 (7 0-0 transposes to Line B211) 7...d5 8 exd5 exd5 9 a3 ♘bd7 10 0-0 c6 11 ♖ad1 ♖e8 12 h3 ♗h5 13 ♖fe1 ♕b6 14 ♕c1 ♗d6 with an equal position, Lang-Přibyl, Nuremberg 1989.

b) 6...d5!? 7 e5 (7 ♘e5 ♗xe2 8 ♕xe2 c6 leads to equality) 7...♘fd7 8 ♘d2 ♗xe2 9 ♘xe2 c5 10 c3 ♘c6 11 0-0 cxd4 (11...b5 is another plan) 12 cxd4 ♕b6 13 ♖b1 0-0 14 b4!? ♕c7 15 a3 b5! 16 ♘g3 a5 resulted in a typical kingside vs queenside fight, where Black's counterplay was strong, in the game Zsu.Polgar-Yrjölä, Kecskemet 1988.

B211)

6 0-0 *(D)*



6...0-0

Or:

a) Possibly the thematic 6...d5?! is still premature in view of 7 ♘e5! ♗xe2 8 ♕xe2 0-0?! (though 8...c6 may be solid enough) 9 ♕b5!, and now:

a1) 9...dxe4?! 10 ♕xb7 ♕xd4 11 ♗f4! (after 11 ♕xa8? ♕xe5 Black gets a strong attack with moves like ...♘g4 and ...♗d6 according to Ribli) 11...♗d6 12 ♕xa8 ♗xe5 13 ♗xe5 ♕xe5 14 h3 c5 15 ♕b7! ± Lesiège-Norwood, Bermuda 1995.

a2) 9...b6 is a better chance according to Ribli: 10 exd5 exd5 11 ♘c6 (Donev's recommendation 11 ♗f4 ± is also good) 11...♘xc6 12 ♕xc6 ♕d6 13 ♕xd6 ♗xd6 14 ♘b5 ±.

b) If Black wants to play for a win, 6...c6!? might be a good choice, with the idea of taking back with the c-pawn if White exchanges on d5, for example. Then:

b1) 7 e5!? dxe5 8 dxe5 ♕xd1 (another idea is 8...♘d5!?) 9 ♖xd1 ♘d5 =.

b2) 7 ♗e3 d5 and now:

b21) 8 exd5 ♗xf3!? 9 ♗xf3 cxd5 is at least equal for Black: 10 ♘e2 ♘c6 11 c3 0-0 12 ♘f4 b5 with counterplay, Seybold-Přibyl, Schellenberg 1991.

b22) 8 ♘d2 ♗xe2 9 ♕xe2 = 0-0 10 e5 ♘fd7 11 f4 c5 12 ♘f3 ♘c6 13 ♘d1 cxd4 14 ♘xd4 ♖c8 15 c3 ♘xd4 16 cxd4 ♕c7 17 ♘c3 ♕c4 18 ♖ac1 ♘b6 19 b3?! ♕xe2 20 ♘xe2 ♗a3 ∓ E.Berg-Blatny, Gausdal 1992.

b23) After 8 e5 ♘fd7 Black is ready to break with ...c5:

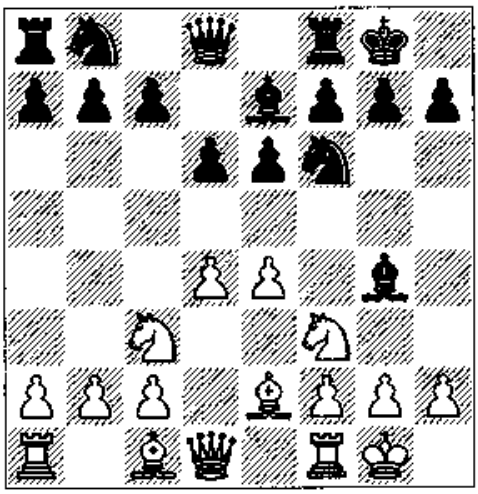
b231) 9 ♘d2 ♗xe2 10 ♘xe2 c5 11 c4!? (11 c3 = is a less ambitious move) 11...cxd4 12 ♗xd4 ♘b6 13 c5?! (13 ♗xb6 axb6 is unclear) 13...♘6d7 14 b4 ♘c6 15 ♕a4 a5! 16 ♕b5 axb4 ∓ Reis-Lalić, Seville 1993.

b232) 9 ♘e1 ♗xe2 10 ♘xe2 c5 11 c3 ♕b6! 12 b3 ♘c6 13 ♘f4 g6 14 ♘f3 cxd4 15 cxd4 a5 16 h4 h5 = Čabrilo-Novoselski, Royan 1989. In this type of 'improved French' White is usually the one who has to play more accurately. The absence of light-squared bishops compared to the true French is highly favourable for Black.

b3) 7 d5!? cxd5 8 exd5 e5 (alternatively, 8...♗xf3!? 9 ♗xf3 e5 10 ♗e3 0-0 11 a4 ♘e8, intending ...f5 and ...♗f6, is not a bad idea, Somogyi-Ruck, Oberwart 1996) 9 ♘d2! ♗xe2 10 ♕xe2 0-0?! (10...♘bd7 11 ♘c4 ♘b6 is more accurate) 11 ♘c4 ♘bd7 12 ♗e3 a6 13 a4 ♖c8 14 a5 ± Oll-Yrjölä, Helsinki 1989.

We now return to 6...0-0 *(D)*:

W



7 ♗e3

Or 7 h3 ♗h5 8 ♗e3 d5 (8...♗g6 9 ♘d2 may be risky because of the plan f4-f5) 9 exd5 ♘xd5! (9...exd5?! 10 g4

transposes to the note to White's 9th move, which is about the only trap for Black in this line) 10 ♘xd5 exd5 11 g4 (11 ♘e5 ♗xe2 12 ♕xe2 ½-½ Chekhov-Epishin, Moscow 1992) 11...♗g6 12 ♘e5 ♘d7 13 ♘xg6 (13 f4?! ♗e4) 13...hxg6 14 ♗f4 ♖e8 15 ♕d2 ♘f8 16 ♗g3 ♘e6 17 c3 ♗d6 18 ♗d3 g5 19 ♖ae1 ♗f4 20 ♕d1 ♕d6 = Callergård-Mokry, Gausdal 1988.

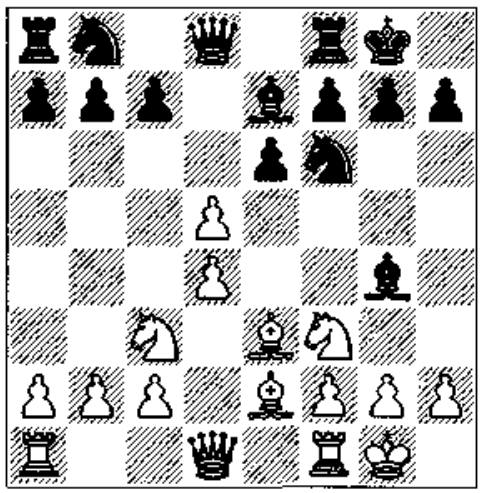
7...d5

This is another opportunity to play the more testing 7...c6 8 ♘d2 (8 d5!?) 8...♗xe2 9 ♕xe2 d5, with similar position-types as after 6...c6.

8 exd5 *(D)*

8 e5?! ♘fd7 9 ♘e1 ♗xe2 10 ♘xe2 c5 11 c3 ♘c6 is not very logical since White has lost a tempo compared with the lines with 6...c6. Kiviaho-Hermlin, Tampere 1992 continued 12 f4 b5 13 g4 ♕b6 14 ♘f3 (14 f5? is premature owing to 14...cxd4) 14...f6! 15 ♔h1 cxd4 16 exf6? (16 ♘exd4 is unclear) 16...♘xf6 17 ♘fxd4 ♘xg4 18 ♗g1 ♘xd4 19 ♘xd4 ♘f6 20 ♕e2 ♘e4 ∓.

B



8...exd5

Black has two other moves, both of which seem to equalize without trouble:

a) 8...♘xd5 (the simplest way to make a draw) 9 ♘xd5 exd5 10 ♘e5 ♗xe2 11 ♕xe2 ♘d7 12 ♘xd7 (12 f4? ♘f6 ∓) 12...♕xd7 13 ♕d2 (13 ♗f4 ½-½ Goldin-Khalifman, Sochi 1989) 13...♕b5 = Hulak-Miles, Wijk aan Zee 1987.

b) Because of the solid nature of the black position, even 8...♗xf3!? 9 ♗xf3 exd5 is possible, depriving White of the chance to occupy e5:

b1) 10 ♕d3 c6 11 ♘e2 ♘bd7 12 c3 ♖e8 13 ♘g3 g6 14 ♗f4 ♘f8 15 ♖fe1 ♘e6 16 ♗d2 ♗d6 17 ♘f1 ♕b6 18 ♕c2 c5!? (18...♖e7 =) 19 dxc5 ♗xc5 20 ♗h6 d4 21 ♖ad1 ♖ac8 with an active position, Lechtynsky-Bezold, Brno 1993.

b2) 10 ♖e1 c6 11 ♕d3 ♘bd7 12 ♘e2 ♖e8 13 ♘g3 g6 14 ♗g5 ½-½ Van der Sterren-Hort, Amsterdam 1987. Black can continue comfortably with ...♘f8-e6.

9 ♘e5

The biggest danger for Black is to drift into a position where the bishop becomes a target for a pawn-storm on g6: 9 h3!? ♗h5?! (9...♗xf3 10 ♗xf3 c6 should be at least as good as note 'b' to Black's 8th move) 10 g4! ♗g6 11 ♘e5 c6?! (11...♗b4!? fights for the e4-square) 12 f4 ♗e4 13 g5 ♘e8 14 ♘xe4 dxe4 15 ♗c4 ± ♘d6 16 ♗b3 ♘f5 17 ♕h5! ♘xe3 18 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 19 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 20 ♕b3 1-0 Mäki-Puranen, Tampere 1997.

9...♗xe2 10 ♘xe2 ♘bd7 11 ♘g3 ♗d6 12 ♗f4

12 f4 is a positionally risky continuation, because it weakens some light squares.

12...♖e8 13 ♘d3

This leads to inevitable simplifications, but White cannot maintain the e5 strongpoint: 13 ♖e1 ♘e4! 14 ♘d3 (after 14 ♘xe4 dxe4 Black threatens ...f6) 14...♗xf4 15 ♘xf4 ♕g5 16 ♘d3 g6 17 ♕c1 ♕f6 18 c3 c6 19 ♕f4 ♕xf4 20 ♘xf4 ♘d6 21 ♘d3 h5 = ½-½ D.Johansen-Speelman, Manila OL 1992.

13...♗xf4 14 ♘xf4 ♘f8 15 ♖e1 ♖xe1+ 16 ♕xe1 ♕d6 17 ♘d3 ♖e8 18 ♕a5 ♕b6

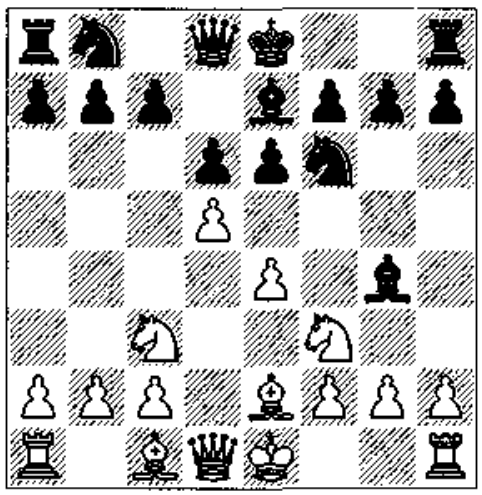
½-½ Andersson-Speelman, Volmac-Lyon ECC 1991.

Conclusion: This is rather a routine approach by White, and Black has several ways to equalize. The line is not an absolute draw if Black carries out the standard ...d5 with the help of ...c6 first.

B212)

6 d5 *(D)*

B



With this move White gains some space advantage but Black's formation remains solid enough.

6...exd5

6...e5?! 7 ♗e3 c6 (7...♗xf3 8 ♗xf3 c6 9 ♕d3 0-0 10 h4 ♘a6 11 dxc6 ♘b4 12 ♕e2 ♘xc6 13 ♖d1 ♕a5 14 0-0 ♕b4 15 ♕b5 ± Loginov-Maiwald, Budapest 1993) 8 ♘d2 cxd5 9 exd5 ♗xe2 10 ♕xe2 a6 11 a4 ♘bd7 12 a5 0-0 13 ♘c4 gave White a positional grip on the queenside in Neverovsky-Vaulin, Kstovo 1994.

7 exd5 0-0

In Filippov-Jacimović, Elista OL 1998 Black gave up his bishop too easily: 7...♗xf3?! 8 ♗xf3 0-0 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 g3 ♖e8 11 a4 a5 12 ♘b5 ♘c5 13 c3 ♘fd7 14 ♖e1 ♘e5 15 ♗e2 ♗f6 16 ♗e3 ♘ed7 17 ♗f1 ♖e7 18 ♗g2 ± and Black was doomed to passivity.

8 0-0

White has also aimed to castle queenside but that naturally involves some risk:

a) 8 ♗e3 ♘bd7 9 ♕d2 a6 10 0-0-0!? ♗xf3 11 ♗xf3 ♘b6 12 ♗e2 c6 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 ♗d4 d5 15 ♕e3 ♖b8!? 16 ♗xa6 ♖e8 17 ♖he1 ♘bd7 18 ♕g3 c5 19 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 with practical chances and some compensation, Mirallès-Seret, French Cht 1991.

b) 8 ♘d4 ♗xe2 9 ♕xe2 ♖e8 10 ♗e3 ♘bd7 11 0-0-0 ♗f8 12 g4 ♘e4 13 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 14 f3 ♖e8 15 ♖he1 a6 16 ♔b1 ♘e5 17 ♘f5 ♕d7 = Petkov-Zakhariev, Bankia 1991.

8...♖e8

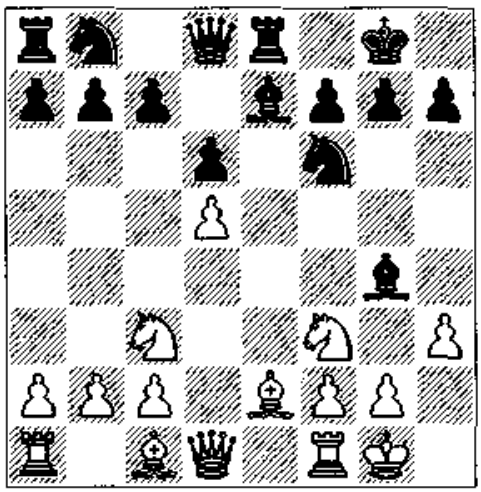
8...♘bd7 9 ♗e3 ♖e8 10 a4 ♗f8 11 a5 a6 12 ♖a4!? ♘c5 13 ♖b4 ♕c8 (13...♖b8) 14 h3 ♗h5 15 ♖f4 ♗g6?!

(it is not easy to see what White is going to do after 15...♕d8, for instance) 16 ♘h4 c6 17 ♘xg6 hxg6 18 ♗f3 ± Boidman-Krivoshei, Prievidza 1998. Here we saw a very interesting rook manoeuvre by White.

9 h3!? *(D)*

White asks what Black is going to do with his bishop. Instead, he achieves nothing by 9 ♖e1 ♘bd7 10 ♗g5 ♗xf3 11 ♗xf3 ♘e5 12 ♗e3 ♘fd7 13 ♗e2 ♗g5! 14 ♗d4 ♘g6 15 ♗f1 ♖xe1 16 ♕xe1 ♗f6 17 ♖d1 a6 18 ♘e4 ♗e5 ½-½ Korchnoi-Miles, Wijk aan Zee 1987.

B



9...♗xf3?!

According to Ribli, Black has better chances to equalize after 9...♗h5. Perhaps Black feared the bishop would be in trouble but after 10 g4 ♗g6 11 ♘d4 (to play f4) there is 11...♘e4 =.

10 ♗xf3

Now White has a small but solid positional advantage. Even if the bishops don't work well just now, they can prove powerful later on after some manoeuvring and they can eliminate Black's counterplay. White enjoys an enduring spatial plus because of the d5-pawn.

10...♘bd7 11 g3!? ♘c5 12 a4

By provoking ...a5, White secures a firm base for his knight. If Black avoids ...a5, White gains space.

12...a5 13 ♗g2 ♘fd7 14 ♖e1 ♗f6 15 ♗d2 ♘e5?!

The activity of the knight is only temporary and it will be pushed back. More sensible is 15...♘b6 16 b3 ±.

16 b3 ♕d7 17 ♘b5! b6?!

This is too passive and weakens the c6-square. 17...c6 is essential, when White should choose 18 ♘c3 ± (and not 18 dxc6 bxc6 19 ♘d4 d5 =).

18 ♗c3!

Now the advance f4 is threatened, emphasizing Black's problems. Black cannot avoid structural weaknesses and gets no counterplay, Malaniuk-V.Ivanov, St Petersburg Chigorin mem 1999. This positional dominance was possible only after many inaccuracies from the black side. The rest was easy for White: 18...♖e7 19 f4 ♘g6 20 ♗xf6 gxf6 21 ♖xe7 ♕xe7 22 ♕e1 ♖e8 23 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 24 ♔f2 ♔f8 25 h4! ♔e8 26 h5 ♘f8 27 ♖d1 ♔d8 28 ♘a7 ± ♖e8 29 ♗h3 ♘fd7 30 h6 ♘b8 31 ♗f5 ♘ca6 32 ♔f3 ♘b4 33 ♘b5 ♖h8 34 c3 ♘4a6 35 ♘d4 ♖e8 36 ♖h1 ♖h8 37 ♖e1 ♖f8 38 ♗c2 ♘c5 39 ♔g4 ♖h8 40 ♔h4 ♘cd7 41 ♔h3 ♘f8 42 b4 axb4 43 cxb4 ♘g6 44 ♗d3 ♖e8 45 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 46 a5 bxa5 47 bxa5 ♘d7 1-0.

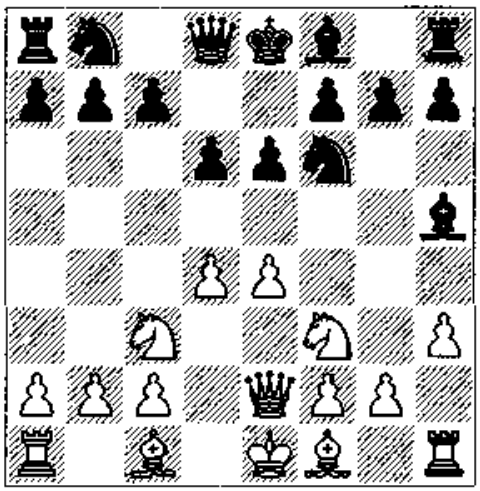
Conclusion: There is more spirit in 6 d5 than in the previous line. Still, in the static position-type arising, Black

shouldn't have much trouble with accurate play. White has only a small space advantage and there are no weaknesses in the black camp.

B22)

5 h3 ♗h5 6 ♕e2!? *(D)*

B



This aggressive method is the one many players are afraid of when considering 2...♗g4. However, this line also gives Black more play than some of the more solid ones.

6...c6

White was threatening ♕b5+, and 6...♘bd7?! 7 g4 ♗g6 8 h4 h5 9 g5 ± is hardly a viable option.

However, the not so obvious plan starting with 6...a6!? has scored well in practice. After 7 g4 ♗g6 8 h4 (8 ♗g5!? ♗e7 9 h4 h5 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 {10...gxf6!?} 11 g5 ♗e7 12 0-0-0 b5 13 ♕e3 ♘d7 = Hennig-Hickl, Hamburg 1995) 8...h5 9 g5 ♘fd7 White has tried the following moves:

a) 10 ♗h3 and then:

a1) 10...♗e7 11 ♗e3 b5 12 ♘d2 b4 13 ♘a4 d5!? 14 exd5 ♗xc2 15 b3 (15 dxe6 ♗xa4 16 exd7+ ♘xd7) 15...exd5 16 ♖c1 ♗g6 is unclear, Pogorelov-Miles, Andorra 1994.

a2) 10...b5 11 a3 ♗e7 12 ♗f4 ♘b6 13 ♗g3 c6 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♘d2 d5 led to a complicated position in Zsu.Polgar-Anand, Amsterdam OHRA 1990.

b) A natural way to develop is 10 ♗e3 b5 11 ♘d2 ♘b6, and now:

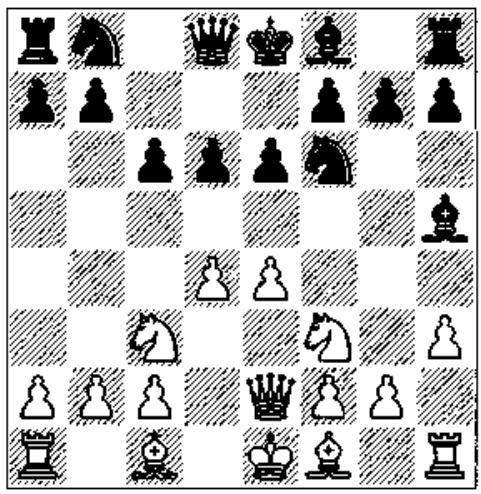
b1) 12 f4 is well met by 12...d5!.

b2) 12 ♗h3 b4 13 ♘d1 d5 14 f3 ♘c6 15 c3 ♗e7 was unclear in K.Berg-Jansa, Herning 1991.

b3) 12 d5!? is a very notable idea. 12...e5 (since this looks positionally bad, maybe Black should play 12...b4 13 ♘d1 exd5 14 ♗xb6 cxb6 15 exd5+ ±) 13 a4 b4 14 ♘d1 c6 15 a5 ♘6d7 16 ♕c4 c5 17 c3 bxc3 18 ♘xc3 ♗e7 19 b4! ± I.Farago-Mokry, Austria 1992. White has a big positional plus.

We now return to 6...c6 *(D)*:

W



7 g4

White can develop the bishop first:

a) 7 ♗f4 ♗e7 (Stohl's suggestion 7...d5!? looks better) 8 g4 ♗g6 9 ♗g2 d5 10 exd5 ♘xd5 (10...cxd5!?) 11

♘xd5 ♕xd5 12 ♘h4 ♕a5+ (12...♕xd4 13 ♗e5 ±) 13 ♗d2 ♕a6 14 ♘xg6 ♕xe2+ 15 ♔xe2 hxg6 16 b4! ♘d7 17 a4 and White has the initiative, Aleksandrov-Sakaev, USSR jr Ch (Kherson) 1991.

b) 7 ♗g5 is liable to transpose to Line B221. After 7...♗e7 (7...♘bd7 8 0-0-0 ♕a5 9 g4 ♗g6 transposes to note 'c' to Black's 8th move in Line B221) 8 0-0-0 Black should not be tempted by 8...♘xe4?! 9 ♕xe4 ♗xg5+ 10 ♘xg5 ♕xg5+ (or 10...♗xd1 11 ♘xe6!) 11 f4 ♕h4? 12 g4 d5 13 ♕e1 winning a piece, Molander-Puranen, Jyväskylä 1996.

7...♗g6

Now:

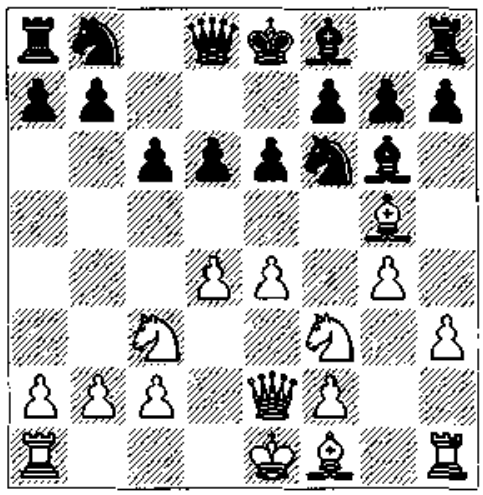
B221: 8 ♗g5!? 132
B222: 8 h4 134

The former is rather dangerous for Black, but the latter is played more often, and is also highly critical.

B221)

8 ♗g5!? *(D)*

B



8...♗e7

8...♘bd7!? is a very notable alternative even though rare in practice.

a) Maybe it is rare because not everyone knows the tactical point 9 e5 dxe5 10 dxe5 ♕b6! and after 11 0-0-0 ♘d5 Black is fine.

b) 9 ♗g2 ♗e7 10 ♘d2 e5! 11 ♘b3 ♘f8 12 ♗e3 (12 0-0-0!? and 12 d5!? are both interesting alternatives) 12...♘e6 13 0-0-0 ♘d7 14 h4 h6 15 ♖d2 ♘f4! 16 ♕f3 ♘xg2 17 ♕xg2 f6 18 ♖hd1 0-0 19 dxe5 ♘xe5 20 ♗d4 ♘c4 21 ♖e2 b5 gives Black counterplay, Lutz-Epishin, Tilburg 1992.

c) Most natural is 9 0-0-0!? ♕a5 (9...♗e7 is more solid) 10 ♗g2 (10 ♗d2! may be more troublesome for Black, but 10 d5 cxd5 11 exd5 e5 is perfectly comfortable for him: 12 ♘d4 ♗e7 13 ♘b3 ♕d8 14 f4 exf4 15 ♗xf4 0-0 16 h4 h5 17 g5 ♘g4 18 ♗h3 ♘de5 = Plaskett-Benjamin, Bermuda 1998) 10...d5 11 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 12 exd5 ♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 cxd5 14 ♘e5 ♗d6 15 ♘xg6 hxg6 16 ♔b1 0-0-0 17 c4 dxc4 18 ♕xc4+ ♔b8 = Summerscale-Benjamin, Internet ICC 2000.

In summary, the rather untested move 8...♘bd7!? is well worth considering.

9 ♗xf6

9 ♕e3!? is an important alternative:

a) 9...♘bd7 10 ♗xf6 (10 ♗d3 or 10 0-0-0 might be worth trying) 10...♘xf6 11 0-0-0 d5 12 exd5 (12 e5 ♘e4 ∓) 12...♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 14 ♔b1 ♗e4 15 ♗e2 0-0 16 ♖he1 ♗xf3 17 ♗xf3 ♕g5 18 ♗g2 ♕xe3 ½-½ Tondivar-Dunnington, Ostend 1993.

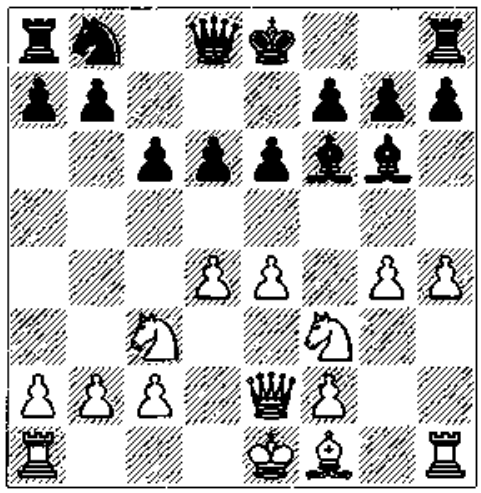
b) 9...d5 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 ♗d3 and then:

b1) 11...♘a6 12 a3 ♘c5!? 13 dxc5 d4 14 ♕f4 dxc3 15 b4 ♕b8 16 ♕e3 (16 e5 ±) 16...b6 17 0-0 0-0 18 ♖fd1 bxc5 19 bxc5 e5 20 ♖ab1 ♕c7 21 ♖b3 ± Tunik-Vorotnikov, Krasnodar 1991.

b2) 11...♕a5 12 0-0-0 ♘d7 13 ♔b1 (13 ♘d2? c5! ∓) 13...♗e7 14 ♘d2 dxe4 15 ♗xe4! ♘f6 16 ♘c4 ♕c7 17 ♘e5 ♗xe4 18 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♕xe4 is slightly better for White, Tunik-Meshkov, Russia 1992.

9...♗xf6 10 h4 *(D)*

B



Now:

B2211: 10...h6?! 133
B2212: 10...h5 134

The evidence so far strongly suggests that the latter is superior.

B2211)

10...h6?! 11 0-0-0 ♘d7

11...♕a5 12 e5 dxe5 13 dxe5 ♗e7 14 ♘d4!? (intending f4-f5 and ♖h3; 14 ♘d2 ♘d7 15 f4 0-0-0 16 ♘c4 is a little better for White, Porrasmaa-Puranen, Finnish Cht 1997) gives White a strong initiative: 14...♗b4 15 h5 ♗h7 16 ♖h3! ♘d7 17 f4 0-0-0 18 a3 ♗e7 19 ♗g2 ♘c5 20 ♕c4! ♖d7 21 ♗xc6 ♖xd4 22 ♖xd4 bxc6 23 b4 ♕xa3+ 24 ♔d2?! (24 ♔d1) 24...♘b7? (24...♘e4+ is equal) 25 ♕xc6+ ♔b8 26 ♖d7 ♕xb4 27 ♕c7+ ♔a8 28 ♖xe7 ♕xf4+ 29 ♔e1 ♕b4 30 ♖f3 ♖b8 31 ♖fxf7 ♕xg4 32 ♕xb8+ 1-0 Norri-Puranen, Jyväskylä 1993.

12 ♔b1

Better than 12 ♕e3 ♕b6 13 ♗e2 e5 = Stangl-Bezold, Bad Homburg 1996.

The brutal continuation 12 e5!? ♗e7 13 exd6 ♗xd6 14 ♘e5 ♗h7 15 f4 f6?! (15...♕e7) 16 f5! ♕e7 17 ♘c4 ♗f4+ 18 ♔b1 ♗g8 19 fxe6 ♗xe6 20 ♖e1 ♗g3 21 d5 ♗xe1 22 dxe6 ± was successful in the game Halkias-Biti, Aviles 2000.

12...♕c7 13 ♖g1!? h5

On 13...0-0-0, 14 h5 ♗h7 15 g5 hxg5 16 ♘xg5 ♗g8 17 f4 ± is strong. However, Black's bishops are now shut out of play.

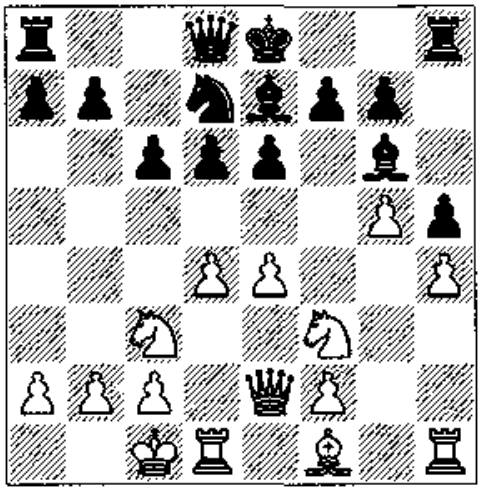
14 g5 ♗e7 15 d5! e5 16 ♗h3 0-0-0 17 ♘d2 ♔b8 18 ♘c4 ♘b6 19 ♘xb6 ♕xb6 20 ♖d3 ♔a8 21 a3 ♖df8 22 ♗f5 ♗h7 23 ♖gd1 g6

The bishop on h7 looks awful, but Black is hoping to break out with ...f6. The end of the classic game Rogers-Milos, Manila OL 1992 is enjoyable: 24 dxc6! bxc6 (24...gxf5 allows a rapid mating attack with 25 ♘d5 ♕d8 26 ♖b3) 25 ♗d7 ♕c7? (Black is hoping for 26 ♗h3 f6 with a good game but 25...♖b8 26 b3 ♕c7 was necessary, although after 27 ♗h3 White keeps the edge because 27...f6 is not playable) 26 ♗xc6+!! ♕xc6 27 ♘d5 ♗d8 28 ♖c3 ♕b7 29 ♖b3 ♕c6 30 ♖dd3 ♗a5 31 ♖dc3! ♗xc3 32 ♕a6!! 1-0.

Conclusion: This line is difficult for Black, and 10...h5 is therefore recommended...

B2212)

10..h5 11 g5 ♗e7 12 0-0-0 ♘d7 *(D)*



13 ♗h3

The idea is to play 14 d5. Otherwise:

a) A solid idea is 13 ♕e3 0-0 14 ♗d3 ♕a5 (14...♕b6 15 ♘d2 e5 looks better) 15 ♘d2 e5 16 f4 exf4 17 ♕xf4 b5 18 ♔b1 ♖ae8 19 ♕g3 with a slight advantage for White, Grivas-Christiansen, Erevan OL 1996.

b) 13 d5!?, with similar ideas to Line B2211, is untested. In comparison, ♔b1 is probably more useful for White than ...♕c7 is for Black. Black could then consider 13...exd5 14 exd5 0-0.

13...d5

After 13...0-0?! 14 ♘d2 d5 15 ♘f1!? dxe4 16 ♘g3 White can exploit the weakness of h5.

14 ♘e5

14 exd5 cxd5 15 ♖he1 ♖c8 affords Black counterplay while 14 ♖he1 dxe4 15 ♘xe4 ♕a5 16 ♔b1 0-0-0 is equal.

14...♘xe5 15 dxe5 ♕a5 16 exd5 cxd5

Black seems to be doing well in this position:

a) 17 ♔b1 ♗b4 18 ♘b5 ♖c8 gives Black serious counterplay.

b) 17 f4 and then:

b1) 17...♗b4!? is critical: 18 ♕b5+ (18 f5!? ♗xf5 19 ♗xf5 ♗xc3 20 ♗d3 ♗b4 is rather complicated, though 21 g6? ♕xa2 22 c3 ♖c8 ∓ is too risky for White) 18...♕xb5 19 ♘xb5 ♖c8 20 f5!? with unclear play.

b2) 17...0-0 18 f5 exf5 19 ♖xd5 (according to Stohl, 19 ♘xd5 is better, though after 19...♖fe8 Black is threatening to play both ...♕xa2 and ...♗d6) 19...♕b4 20 ♗g2 ♖fe8 (e5 and h4 are now weak) 21 ♔b1 (21 ♖d7 ♕f4+ 22 ♔b1 ♗c5 gives Black the initiative) 21...♗f8 ∓ Epishin-Mokry, Vienna 1991.

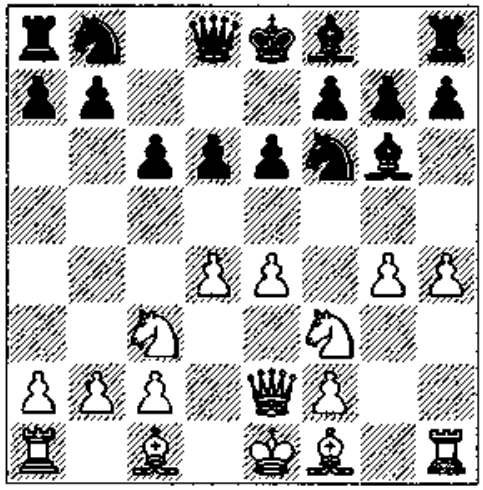
Conclusion: Black's defences seem to be holding up in this line, though there is still plenty of unexplored territory.

B222)

8 h4 *(D)*

This is the main line of the whole 3 e4 system. It seems most players consider this more natural than 8 ♗g5. Black is immediately forced to decide between 8...h5 and 8...h6 and, as in other similar situations, the former appears to be better.

8...h5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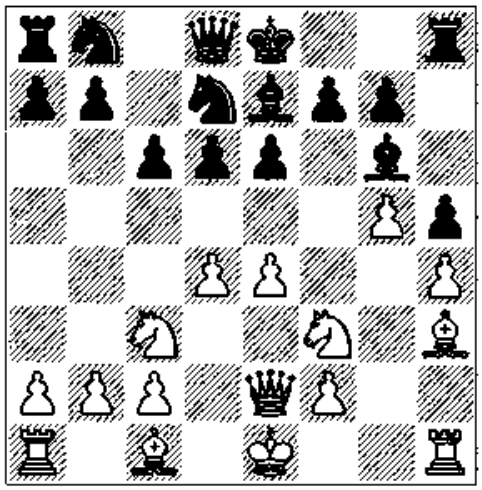
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8...h6 tends to lead to a passive position: 9 h5 ♗h7 10 g5 hxg5, and now:

a) 11 ♗xg5 ♕b6! (11...♕a5 12 ♗d2) 12 0-0-0 ♘bd7 leads to unclear play according to Goldin.

b) 11 ♘xg5! d5 12 e5 ♘g8 13 ♗h3 ♘h6 14 ♘xh7 ♖xh7 15 ♕d3 ♖h8 16 ♗e3 ♕a5 17 0-0-0 ♕a6 18 ♕d2 ♘d7 19 ♗g5 b5 20 ♕d3 ♘b6 21 ♔b1 ♕b7 (after Ribli's suggestion 21...♘c4!? things are maybe not so clear) 22 ♘e2 ♕d7 23 f4 ± I.Farago-Nevednichy, Bled 1992.

9 g5 ♘fd7 10 ♗h3

10 ♗e3 allows Black to play 10...d5 immediately. After 11 ♘d2 we have:

a) In reply to Malaniuk's suggestion 11...♘a6, White can choose between 12 ♗g2!?, 12 f4 and 12 a3 ♘c7 13 ♗g2.

b) 11...♗b4!? 12 ♗g2 ♕a5 (safer is 12...♘b6 13 0-0 ♘a6 or 12...♘a6) 13 0-0 ♗xc3 14 bxc3 ♕xc3 15 f4! with compensation according to Goldin.

10...♗e7 *(D)*

11 ♗e3

The most natural developing move but White has other important options:

a) 11 d5!? cxd5 12 exd5 e5 13 ♗e3 0-0 14 ♘d2 (14 ♖g1 ♘a6 15 0-0-0 ♖c8!? 16 ♕b5 ♖xc3 17 bxc3 ♘dc5 gives Black fair compensation, Tregubov-Nogueiras, Linares 1996) 14...♘a6 15 ♘b3?! (both 15 ♘f1!? ♘b4 16 ♖c1 ♖c8 17 ♘g3 ♖xc3 18 bxc3 ♘xd5, with compensation for the exchange, and 15 ♘de4!? are better according to Chekhov) 15...♘b4 16 ♖c1 ♘b6 17 ♗g2 ♖c8 18 a3 ♘a6 19 ♘a5 ♖xc3! 20 bxc3 ♕c7 21 0-0 (21 ♕d2 ♘a4 22 ♘b3 b6 23 0-0 ♘xc3 also offers Black good compensation, but Chekhov's suggestion 21 ♗d2!? looks better) 21...♕xc3 with strong compensation, Damljanović-Hodgson, Čačak 1996.

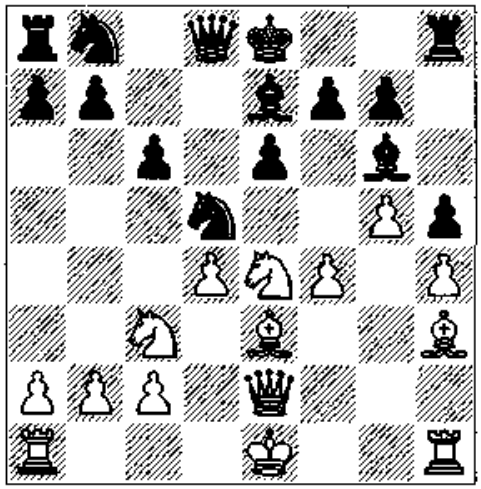
b) With 11 ♘d2!?, White hurries to push the f-pawn, and this may well be the most critical line:

b1) Goldin gives 11...e5 12 dxe5 dxe5 (12...♘xe5 13 f4 ±) 13 ♘f1!, with ♘g3 to follow, as unpleasant for Black.

b2) 11...d5 12 f4 dxe4 13 ♘dxe4 (13 ♘cxe4!? ♘b6 14 c3 is unclear) 13...♘b6 (13...♕a5?! 14 ♗d2 ♘a6 15 0-0-0 0-0-0 16 ♘g3! ± allows White

to push f5 soon) 14 ♗e3 ♘d5 *(D)* and now:

W



b21) 15 0-0-0!? is somewhat risky:

b211) 15...♕a5!? 16 ♗d2 ♕a6?! 17 ♕f3! ♗xe4 18 ♕xe4 g6 (18...♘xc3 19 ♗xc3 ♕xa2 20 f5 ±) 19 ♗xe6! fxe6 20 ♕xe6 ± Scherbakov-Hasangatin, Dečin 1996. White has a strong attack.

b212) 15...♘a6! 16 ♖hf1 ♕d7 17 ♗g1 0-0 18 a3 ♖fe8 19 ♕f3 ♖ad8 (19...b5!? is interesting) 20 ♘g3 b5 21 f5 exf5 22 ♘xf5 ♕b7 23 ♘e4 b4 24 a4 ♗f8 = Pogorelov-Urday, Cordoba 1994.

b22) 15 0-0 ♘xe3 (15...♘a6 16 ♘xd5 cxd5 17 ♘g3 ± intending f5; 15...♘xc3 16 ♘xc3 ♕a5 17 f5 ♗xf5 18 ♗xf5 exf5 19 ♗f4 ±) 16 ♕xe3 ♘a6! (considerably stronger than both 16...♘d7 17 f5! ♗xf5 18 ♗xf5 exf5 19 ♘d6+ ♔f8 20 ♘xf5 ± and 16...0-0 17 ♖ad1 ± as h5 is in trouble after ♕e2 and ♘g3). Now White has two options:

b221) 17 f5!? exf5 18 ♗xf5 0-0! 19 ♗xg6 (19 ♖ad1 transposes to 'b2224') 19...fxg6 20 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 = Goldin-Epishin, New York 1993.

b222) 17 ♖ad1 is stronger according to Goldin:

b2221) 17...♕b6 18 f5! exf5 19 ♘d6+ ± Goldin.

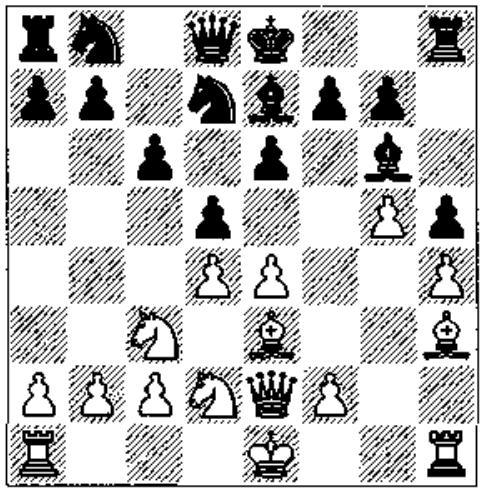
b2222) 17...♗xe4 18 ♘xe4 g6 19 c4 is also unpleasant for Black – Goldin.

b2223) 17...♘b4 18 ♖d2 ♘d5 19 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 (19...cxd5 20 ♘g3 ±) 20 ♘g3 ± and White is about to achieve f5.

b2224) 17...0-0! 18 f5 exf5 (½-½ Lukacs-Jansa, Austrian Cht 1994) 19 ♗xf5 ♗xf5 20 ♖xf5 ♕d7 might look positionally good for White because of his pawn-majority and active pieces, but he also has some problems with his vulnerable king.

11...d5 12 ♘d2 *(D)*

B



12...♘a6!

Another logical idea is 12...b5!? 13 a3 ♘b6 14 0-0 (14 f4!?) 14...♘8d7 15 f4 dxe4 16 f5!? exf5 17 ♗xf5 ♗xf5 18 ♖xf5 g6 19 ♖f4 (after 19 ♖f2 f5!? 20 gxf6 ♘xf6 21 ♘cxe4 ♘g4 Black gets

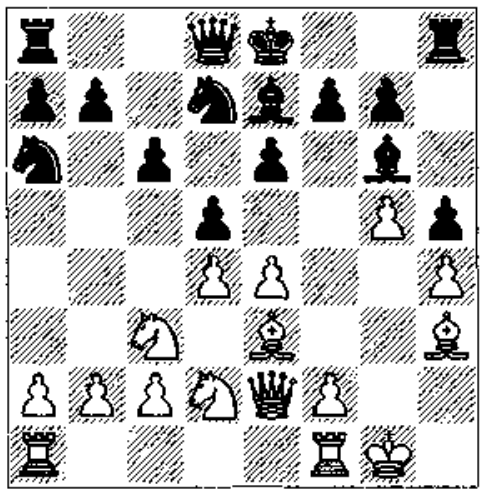
a strong knight) 19...0-0 20 ♘dxe4 ♘c4 21 ♖afl ♘xe3 (more unclear is 21...♘xb2!? 22 d5 ♘e5) 22 ♕xe3 ± Lagunow-Gausel, Berlin 1991.

13 a3

This cautious move is maybe not the best. White has two more aggressive options:

a) 13 0-0 *(D)* and then:

B



a1) 13...♘c7 14 f4 dxe4 and now instead of the unclear 15 f5 exf5 16 ♗xf5 ♘d5, Yermolinsky-Blocker, USA 1995, Black cannot fully equalize after 15 ♘cxe4 f5 (15...♗f5 16 ♗xf5 exf5 17 ♘f2 ±) 16 ♘f2 ± according to Yermolinsky.

a2) After the more active 13...♘b4 White has:

a21) 14 f4!? dxe4 (14...♘xc2 15 f5 looks wild) 15 ♘dxe4 ♕a5 = places the vital f5-square under control.

a22) 14 ♖ac1 dxe4 15 a3 ♘d5 16 ♘dxe4 ♘xc3 17 ♘xc3 ♘b6 18 f4 ♕c7 19 ♔h1 0-0-0 20 ♖ce1 ♖he8 21 ♗g1 ♗d6?! (21...♕d7 = again places f5 under control) 22 f5 exf5 23 ♕xe8 ♖xe8 24 ♖xe8+ ♔d7 25 ♖g8 ± ½-½ Szekely-Hillarp Persson, Hampstead 1998.

b) 13 f4 dxe4 14 ♘dxe4 and now:

b1) 14...♗f5? 15 ♗xf5 exf5 16 ♘g3 g6 17 0-0-0 is catastrophic for Black as there is no move to stop d5: 17...0-0?! 18 d5! cxd5 19 ♘xd5 ♘c7 20 ♘xf5! gxf5 21 ♕xh5 ♘e6 22 ♗d4 ♘xd4 23 ♖hg1 ♘e5 24 ♘f6+ 1-0 Damljanović-D.Fernando, La Coruña 1998.

b2) 14...♕a5 is the right move, to stop f5 and to play ...♗f5 if necessary. Yermolinsky-Benjamin, Chicago 1995 continued 15 0-0 ♗f5 16 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 17 a3 ♘c7 18 ♖f2 ½-½.

We now return to 13 a3 *(D)*:

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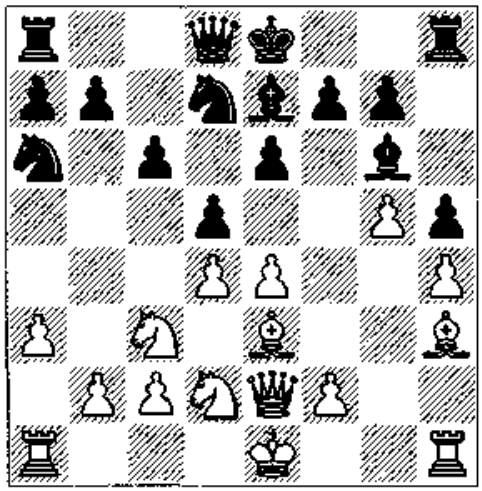


13...♘c7 14 f4 dxe4 15 ♘dxe4

15 ♘cxe4 ♘d5 16 0-0 ♗f5! 17 ♗xf5 exf5 18 ♘f2 0-0 19 c4 ♘xe3 20 ♕xe3 ♖e8 21 ♖ae1 ♘f8 22 ♕d3 g6 23 d5 cxd5 24 cxd5 ♕c7 25 ♕c4 ♕b6! 26 b4 ♗d6 ∓ Babu-Hodgson, Novi Sad OL 1990 is an instructive example where White's weaknesses turned the game in Black's favour.

15...♘d5 16 0-0 ♘xc3

16...♘xe3 17 ♕xe3 0-0 18 f5 exf5 19 ♗xf5 ♘b6! 20 ♗xg6 fxg6 21 ♘c5 ♗xc5 22 dxc5 ♘d5 = Agamaliev-Malaniuk, Swidnica 1997.

17 ♘xc3 ♘b6 18 f5 ♗xf5 19 ♗xf5 exf5 20 ♖xf5 g6 21 ♖f2 0-0 22 ♖af1 ♕d7

Once again the typical position-type of this line. White cannot benefit from his positional pluses because of his vulnerable king.

23 ♘e4 ♖ae8 24 ♕f3 ♘d5 25 ♗d2 b5

= Szekely-Baburin, Cappelle la Grande 1996. Black has managed to fix the queenside majority.

Conclusion: This line (8 h4) is more important in practice than Line B221. The play is extremely complicated, but many lines lead to positions where Black can expect some counterplay. For most players it will probably be impossible to memorize all the precise sequences and often it is impossible to pinpoint the best move, but here are some general rules for Black:

1) ...h5 is usually the best answer to h4.

2) a6 is often a good route to develop the queen's knight.

3) In many cases it is important to stop White playing f4-f5.

16 3rd Move Alternatives for White

1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4

In this chapter we look at the following moves:

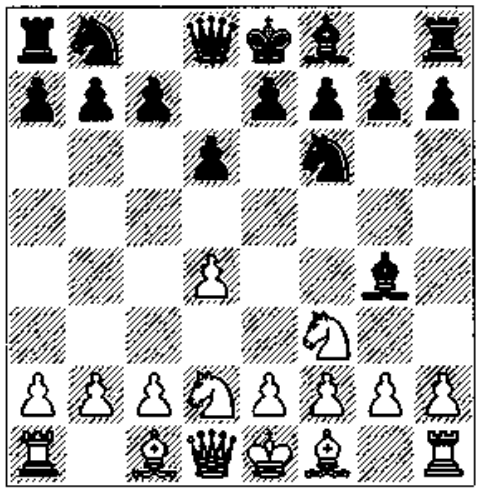
A:	**3 ♘bd2**	139
B:	**3 ♕d3**	140
C:	**3 h3**	141
D:	**3 g3**	143
E:	**3 c3**	144
F:	**3 e3**	145
G:	**3 ♗g5**	146
H:	**3 ♗f4**	147
I:	**3 b3**	148

It must be noted that some methods may transpose to Chapter 12 or 15; for example, 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e4 transposes to Line B of Chapter 15.

The rather odd-looking 3 ♘fd2 avoids ...♗xf3 and the doubling of pawns, and it has some logical ideas; for example, f3 and e4. However, it is too slow, as Black just continues 3...d5 4 c4 c6 5 ♘c3 e6 6 ♕b3 ♕b6 with a stable position, which is quite equal, though White can easily try too hard; for example, 7 f3 ♗h5 8 e4 dxe4 9 fxe4 ♘d7 10 ♕xb6 axb6 11 ♘f3 ♗d6 12 e5 ♗b8 13 ♗e2 ♘e7 14 ♗e3 c5 15 ♘b5 ♘f5 16 ♗f2 cxd4 17 ♘fxd4 ♘xd4 18 ♗xd4 ♗xe2 19 ♔xe2 ♔e7 and Black is much better, Belotelov-Dovzhik, Paks 2000.

A)

3 ♘bd2 ♘f6 *(D)*



4 h3

Or:

a) 4 e4 is considered in Line B of Chapter 15, and is probably White's best option.

b) 4 c3 ♘bd7 and now:

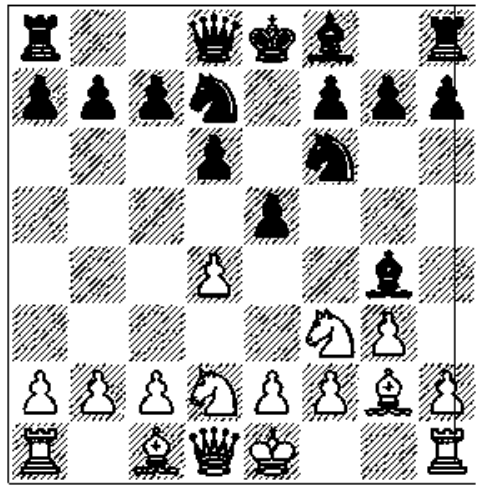
b1) 5 e4 e5 6 ♗c4 exd4 7 cxd4 d5! 8 exd5 ♘b6 9 ♗b5+ ♗d7 10 ♕e2+ ♗e7 11 d6 cxd6 12 0-0 ♗xb5 13 ♕xb5+ ♕d7 14 ♕d3 0-0 15 ♖e1 ♘fd5 = Ulak-Rogovski, Pardubice 1996.

b2) 5 h3 ♗h5 6 e4 e6 7 ♗d3 ♗e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♖e1 c5 ½-½ Kindl-Dietz, Giengen 1987.

b3) 5 g3 e6 6 ♗g2 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♘e1?! d5 = 9 h3?! ♗f5 ∓ 10 g4 ♗g6

11 f4?! c5 ∓ (due to the weak point e4) Gutman-Miles, Wijk aan Zee 1987.

c) After 4 g3 the best plan for Black is 4...♘bd7 5 ♗g2 e5 *(D)*, when White has tried various plans but with no great success:



c1) 6 0-0 ♗e7 and here:

c11) 7 c3 c6 8 ♕b3 ♕c7 9 ♘g5 0-0 10 f3 ♗h5 11 e4 b5 12 a4 a6 13 ♖d1 d5! and Black is OK, Ruffenach-Benoit, France 1994.

c12) 7 h3 ♗h5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♘h4 c6 10 ♘f5 0-0 11 ♘c4 ♗g6 12 g4?! ♗xf5 13 gxf5 ♕c7 14 e3 e4! and Black is better, Giffard – Schmidt-Schäffer, Cannes 1995.

c13) 7 b3 0-0 8 ♗b2 e4! 9 ♘e1 d5 10 c4 c6 11 ♘c2 ♖e8 12 ♘b1 dxc4!? 13 bxc4 ♕b6 14 ♗c3 ♖ad8 15 ♘d2 ♗f8 16 ♖e1 ♕a6 17 ♘e3 ♗h5 with chances for both players, O.Knudsen-Hirtsgaard, Danish League 1989/90.

c2) 6 h3 ♗h5 7 c3 e4! 8 ♘h4 d5 9 ♘f5 ♗g6 10 ♘e3 c6 11 b3 ♗d6 12 ♗b2 ♘h5 13 ♘ef1 f5 14 e3 0-0 is much better for Black, Nguyen-Vadasz, Budapest 1998.

c3) 6 c4 c6 7 ♕c2 ♗e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 b3 is an Old Indian-type position, with Black getting a comfortable position with the useful plan 9...♗h5! 10 ♗b2 ♗g6 11 e4 exd4 12 ♗xd4 d5! 13 ♘h4 ♗xe4 14 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 15 ♗xe4 dxe4 16 ♘f5 ♗f6 17 ♖ad1 ♗xd4 18 ♖xd4 ♕f6 = in Ormos-E.Lendvai, Hungary 1993.

4...♗h5 5 g4

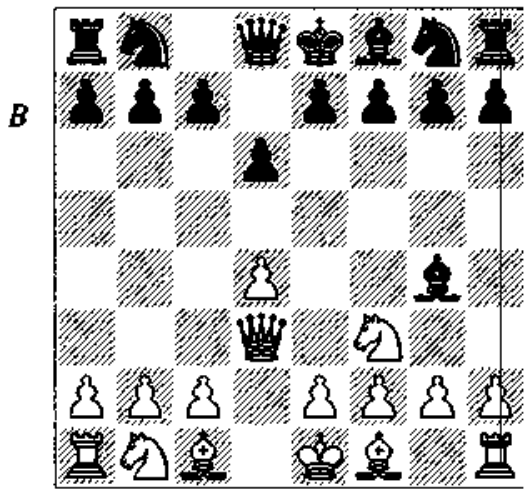
5 e4 e6 is similar to Line B1 of Chapter 15, but White's h3 is premature.

5...♗g6 6 ♘h4 ♗e4! 7 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 8 ♗g2 d5

Black controls the light squares in the centre, and the position is equal. After 9 ♘f3 e6 10 ♘d2 ♘xd2 11 ♗xd2 c6 12 c3 ♘d7 13 ♗f4 ♗e7 14 e3 0-0 15 ♕e2 ♖e8 16 ♗h2?! ♗f6 17 0-0-0?! (Ravikumar-Hodgson, British Ch (Eastbourne) 1990), 17...b5 is better for Black.

B)

3 ♕d3 *(D)*



3...c6

Or:

a) 3...♘d7!? 4 ♗g5 c6 5 ♘c3 ♘gf6 6 e4 e5 7 ♗e2 ♗e7 8 0-0 0-0 is a Philidor-type position, but White has placed his queen quite ineffectively, and Black soon got the upper hand after 9 a4 ♖e8 10 ♖fe1 ♕c7 11 h3 ♗h5 12 d5?! cxd5 13 exd5 e4! 14 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 15 ♕xe4 ♗xg5 16 ♕f5 ♗xf3 17 ♗d3 g6 −+ in B.Hansen-Høiberg, Århus 1993.

b) 3...♘c6!? is interesting; for example, 4 d5 ♘b8 5 h3 ♗d7 6 e4 e5 (6...g6!?) 7 dxe6 fxe6 8 ♗g5 ♗e7 9 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 10 ♕b3 ♘bc6 11 ♘bd2 ♘g6 (11...0-0!?) 12 h4 ♕f6 13 g3! 0-0 14 0-0-0 ♔h8 15 h5 ♘ge5 16 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 17 f4 ± Ciglić-Novacan, Slovenian Cht 1994.

4 ♘g5

Alternatives:

a) 4 ♗f4 ♘d7 5 ♘bd2 ♕c7 6 h3 ♗h5 7 e3 ♘gf6 8 ♗e2 ♗g6 9 ♕b3 ♘d5 10 ♗g3 a5 11 c3 a4 12 ♕a3 ♕a5 13 0-0 b5 ∓ Malek-Ruf, Cannes 1990.

b) 4 e4 ♘f6 5 ♘bd2 (5 ♘c3 e6 6 h3 ♗h5 7 ♗g5 ♗e7 8 ♗e2 ♘bd7 is approximately equal; then 9 g4 ♗g6 10 ♘h4? allows 10...♗xe4 11 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 12 ♕xe4 ♗xg5 13 ♘f5 ♘f6 {13...d5!} 14 ♘xg7+ ♔f8 15 ♕f3 ♔xg7 16 h4 ♕a5+ 17 c3 h6 ∓ Bugajski-Czerwonski, Warsaw 1997) 5...e6 6 c3 ♗e7 is a safe way to play, and after 7 g3 0-0 8 ♗g2 the thematic central push 8...d5 is even more effective than usual, and gives Black a very good position: 9 0-0 ♗h5 10 ♘e5 ♘bd7 11 f4 ♘xe5 12 fxe5 ♘d7 13 exd5 cxd5 14 ♘f3 ♖b8 15 h4 b5 16 ♗g5 b4 ∓ Lagrotteria-Miles, Toscolano 1996.

c) 4 ♘c3 d5 (4...♘d7!? 5 e4 e5) 5 ♘e5 ♗h5 allows White the trick 6 ♕h3 ♘f6 7 g4 ♗g6 8 ♘xg6, when Black has to take back with the f-pawn, and White gets a clear advantage after 8...fxg6 9 g5 ♘h5 10 e4 dxe4 11 ♗c4, Hubert-Lütke, Germany 1997/8.

d) 4 c4!? has been tried in some recent games. 4...♘d7 5 g3 and now:

d1) 5...♘gf6 6 ♗g2 e5 7 ♘bd2 ♗e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 e4 exd4 10 ♘xd4 ♘c5 11 ♕e3 ♕b6 12 h3 ♗d7 13 ♖b1 ♘e8 (13...a5!?) 14 b4 ♘e6 15 ♘f5 ♗g5 16 ♕d3 ± Kruppa-Jossien, Cappelle la Grande 2000.

d2) 5...♗xf3!? 6 ♕xf3 e6 7 ♗g2 ♘gf6 8 0-0 ♗e7 (8...d5!?) 9 e4 0-0 10 ♘c3 e5 11 ♗e3 ♖e8 12 ♖ad1 ♕c7 (Pataki-Dovzhik, Paks 2000) 13 d5! gives White some advantage.

4...e6 5 f3 ♗h5

5...♗f5 6 e4 ♗g6 7 ♕b3 ♕b6 8 ♗e3 ♘f6 9 ♘d2 d5 10 ♗d3 ♘a6 11 ♕xb6 axb6 12 c3 ♗e7 13 ♘h3 dxe4 14 fxe4 ♘g4 15 ♔e2 e5 16 a3 0-0 17 ♘f3 ♘xe3 18 ♔xe3 exd4+ 19 cxd4 ♖fe8 20 ♘f4 ♖ad8 21 ♘xg6 hxg6 = Zurek-Jansa, Czech Cht 1998/9.

6 ♘h3 d5 7 ♘f4 ♗g6

Black has a safe structure.

8 ♕b3 ♕b6 9 ♘xg6 hxg6 10 ♗f4 ♘d7 11 e3 ♘e7 12 c3 ♘c8 13 ♘d2 ♗d6 14 ♗xd6 ♘xd6 15 ♕xb6 axb6 16 ♗d3 b5

∓ Gil Capape-Danailov, Zaragoza 1992.

C)

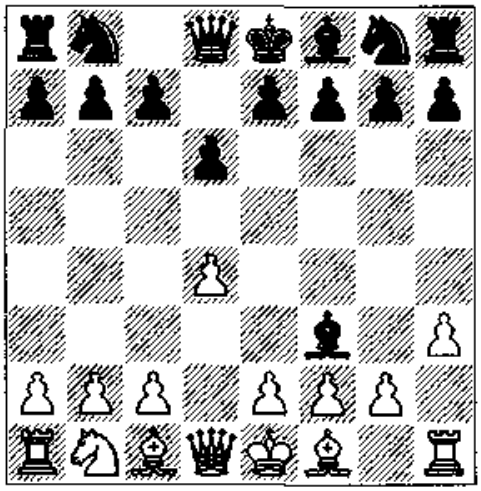
3 h3

White forces Black to define the pawn-formation at once, but it is hard

to see any compensation for the doubled pawns, as White lacks targets in Black's camp.

3...♗xf3 *(D)*

W



4 exf3

4 gxf3 doesn't work in conjunction with h3: 4...♘d7 5 ♗g2 ♘gf6 6 f4 d5 7 c4 c6 8 ♘c3 ♘b6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 ♕b3 e6 11 a4 a5 12 f5 ♗b4! 13 fxe6 fxe6 14 0-0 0-0 and Black has good activity, Fuller-Keene, Coventry 1970.

4...g6

Black is going to develop flexibly with ...♗g7, ...e6, ...♘e7 and ...♘d7, and later start playing against White's weakened pawns.

4...e6 5 ♗d3 g6 (5...d5 6 ♗f4 ♗d6 7 ♕d2 ♘f6 8 ♘c3 ♘c6 9 ♗xd6 cxd6 10 ♘e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♖c8 12 c3 a6 is equal, Ehrke-Gustafsson, 2nd Bundesliga 1996/7) 6 ♗e3 ♗g7 7 ♘c3 ♘e7 8 ♕d2 ♘bc6 9 ♘e2 ♕d7 10 c3 e5 11 h4 exd4 12 cxd4 ♘f5 13 ♗b5 a6 14 ♗a4 d5 again with equality, Fancsy – Har-Zvi, Trier 1989.

5 c3

White has many alternatives:

a) 5 f4 ♗g7 6 ♗d3 e6 7 c3 ♘d7 8 ♘d2 ♘e7 9 ♘f3 c5 10 dxc5 dxc5 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♕e2 ♕c7 13 ♖e1 ♖ad8 14 ♗c4 ♘c6 15 ♗e3 a6 = Obsivac-Okhotnik, Stare Mesto 1992.

b) 5 ♗d3 ♗g7 6 0-0 e6 7 c3 ♘d7 8 ♖e1 ♘e7 9 f4 0-0 10 ♘d2 c5 11 dxc5 ♘xc5 12 ♗f1 ♕c7 13 ♘f3 ♖fd8 14 ♗d2 d5 15 ♕e2 ♘e4 16 ♗e3 ♘f5 = Obsivac-Jansa, Olomouc 1995.

c) 5 ♗c4 ♗g7 6 c3 d5 7 ♗b3 ♘f6 (7...e6!?) 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♖e1 e6 10 ♗g5 h6 11 ♗f4 ♕e7 12 ♕d2 ♔h7 13 ♕e3 ♖c8 14 ♘d2 ♘bd7 15 ♗c2 c5 16 dxc5 ♘xc5 17 ♘b3 is slightly better for White, Fraser-Spraggett, Quebec 1989.

d) 5 ♗e3 ♗g7 6 ♕d2 ♘d7 7 ♘c3 e5 (7...e6!?) 8 dxe5 ♘xe5 9 0-0-0 ♕d7 10 ♗d4 ♔f8 11 f4 ♘c6 12 ♗xg7+ ♔xg7 13 ♘d5 f6 14 ♕c3 ♖f8 15 g4 ± Vokroj-Werner, Vienna 1996.

e) 5 d5 ♘f6 6 ♗b5+ c6 7 dxc6 bxc6 8 ♗a4 ♗g7 9 c3 0-0 10 0-0 ♕c7 11 ♗f4 e5 12 ♗h2 ♘bd7 13 ♘d2 ♘c5 14 ♗c2 d5 was unclear in David-Fondain, Saint Quentin 1998.

5...♗g7 6 ♕b3 ♕c8 7 ♘d2

7 ♗c4 e6 8 0-0 d5 9 ♗e2 ♘e7 10 ♗f4 0-0 11 ♖e1 ♘d7 12 ♗f1 c5 13 ♗d6 ♖e8 14 dxc5 ♘f5 15 ♕b4 a5 16 ♕b5 ♕c6 17 ♘a3 ♘xd6 18 cxd6 ♕xd6 19 ♖ad1 ♕c6 = Silva-Damaso, Lisbon 1995.

7...e6 8 ♘c4 ♘e7

Black develops flexibly, offering White no targets.

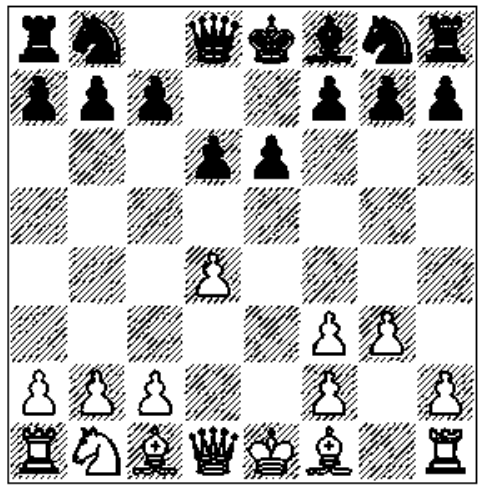
9 ♗d3 ♘d7 10 ♗f4 0-0 11 0-0 d5 12 ♘e5 ♘xe5 13 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 14 dxe5 c5

∓ Konarski-Hodgson, Aberdeen 1998.

D)

3 g3 ♗xf3! 4 exf3 e6 *(D)*

W



In this basic position White has tried almost every possible move.

5 ♗g2

The following should also be taken seriously:

a) 5 c4 ♘d7 transposes to the note to Black's 5th move in Line B of Chapter 13.

b) 5 c3?! d5 6 ♕b3 ♕c8 7 ♘a3 ♘f6 8 ♗f4 c6 9 ♗d3 ♗e7 10 ♕c2 b5! 11 g4 ♘bd7 12 ♘b1 ♕b7 13 ♘d2 c5 14 h4 ♖c8 15 ♕d1 ♕b6 is slightly better for Black, Casadei-Bezold, Cattolica 1992.

c) 5 h4?! d5 6 f4 c5 7 f5?! exf5 8 ♗b5+ ♘c6 9 0-0 ♘f6 10 ♗g5 ♗e7 11 dxc5 0-0 12 ♘c3 d4 13 ♗xc6 bxc6 14 ♘e2 (14 ♘a4 h6 ∓) 14...♗xc5 15 ♕d3 h6 16 ♕xf5 hxg5 17 ♕xc5 ♖e8 18 ♕c4 (18 ♘xd4 ♘e4 19 ♕c4 ♘d2 −+; 18 hxg5 ♘d7 19 ♕c4 ♘e5 ∓) 18...gxh4 19 ♘xd4 ♖e4! ∓ Gutman-Miles, Bundesliga 1985/6.

d) 5 d5!? exd5 6 ♕xd5 c6 7 ♕b3 ♕b6 8 ♗e3 ♕xb3 9 axb3 a6 and now:

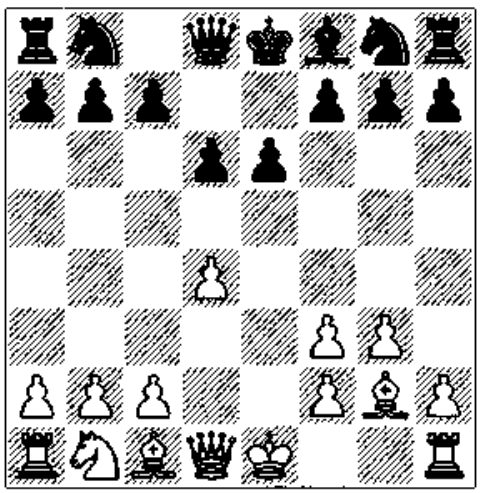
d1) 10 ♘d2 d5 11 c3 ♘d7 12 b4 ♗d6 13 f4 ♘e7 14 ♗h3 ♔d8 15 ♗d4 ♖e8 16 0-0 f6 17 ♘b3 ♔c7 18 ♗e3 g6 19 ♘d4 f5 20 ♘e6+ ♔c8 21 ♗d4 ♘g8 22 ♖fe1 ♘df6 23 ♘g5 ♔d7 24 ♗f1 ♖xe1 25 ♖xe1 ♖e8 26 ♖d1 ♖e7 = Magerramov-Lukin, Pavlodar 1987.

d2) 10 b4 ♘f6 11 b5 d5 12 bxc6 ♘xc6 13 c3 ♗e7 14 ♘d2 0-0 15 ♗h3 ♖ad8 16 ♗b6 ♖de8 17 0-0 ♗d6 18 ♖fe1 ♘e5 19 ♗f5 g6 20 ♗c2 ♘ed7 21 ♗e3 ♖e7 is OK for Black, Garcia Paolicchi-Ribeiro, Linares Z 1995.

e) 5 f4!? c6 6 ♗g2 (6 ♗d3 g6 7 0-0 ♗g7 8 c3 ♘e7 9 ♘d2 ♘d7 10 ♘f3 0-0 11 ♗e3 ♖c8 12 c4 ♘f5 = Zsu.Polgar-Torre, New York 1989) 6...g6 7 ♘d2 (7 0-0 ♗g7 8 a4 ♘e7 9 ♘d2 ♘d7 10 ♘c4 ♕c7 11 c3 0-0 12 h4 ♖ad8 13 ♕e2 h5 14 ♗h3 ♖fe8 15 ♖e1 ♘f6 16 ♗d2 ♘f5 17 ♕d3 b6 18 ♗g2 c5 19 dxc5 bxc5 ∓ Bischoff-Hickl, Baden-Baden 1992) 7...♗g7 8 c3 ♘d7 9 a4 ♘e7 10 0-0 (10 a5 0-0 11 a6?! b5 ∓) 10...0-0 11 ♖e1 ♕c7 12 ♘f3 ♖ac8 13 ♗d2 ♖fd8 14 ♕c2 c5 = Polugaevsky-Miles, Biel 1990.

We now return to 5 ♗g2 *(D)*:

B



5...c6

5...♘f6 6 f4 d5 7 ♕d3 ♘bd7 8 0-0 ♗d6 is also safe; for example, 9 b3 0-0 10 ♗b2 a5 11 c4 c6 12 a4 ♗b4 13 ♘d2 dxc4 14 ♘xc4 ♘d5 15 f5 exf5 16 ♕xf5 ♘7f6 17 ♘e3 ♖e8 18 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 19 ♕d3 ♕d6 20 ♗c1 ♖ad8 ∓ Bus-Popchev, Hradec Kralove 1988.

6 0-0 ♘e7

Black has a very safe position, with plans such as ...g6, ...♗g7, ...♘d7 and ...♕c7, developing nicely.

6...g6 7 ♘d2 (7 c4 ♘e7 8 ♘c3 d5 9 c5?! ♗g7 10 g4 b6 11 b4 a5 12 ♘a4 ♘d7 13 ♖b1 b5 14 ♘c3 axb4 15 ♖xb4 ♘xc5 16 dxc5 ♗xc3 ∓ Csulits-Hümmer, Bundesliga 1991/2) 7...♘d7 8 ♖e1 d5 9 f4 ♘e7 10 ♘f3 ♗g7 11 c3 ♕c7 12 ♘e5 0-0 13 ♕e2 (13 h4 ♖ac8 14 b3 ♖fe8 15 h5 ♘f6 16 hxg6 hxg6 17 g4 c5 18 ♗a3 cxd4 19 cxd4 ♘c6 20 ♖e3 ♘d7 21 ♗b2 ♘dxe5 22 fxe5 ♕b6 ∓ Sale-Ruck, Harkany 1994) 13...♘f5 14 ♗d2 ♖fe8 15 ♗h3 ♘f8 16 ♕d3 ♘d6 = Knežević-Bagirov, Moscow 1991.

7 ♖e1 g6 8 c3 ♗g7 9 ♗g5 0-0 10 ♕b3 h6 11 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 12 f4 ♕c7 13 ♘d2 ♘d7 14 ♘f3 c5 15 ♖ad1

½-½ Salo-Yrjölä, Finnish Cht 1995/6.

E)

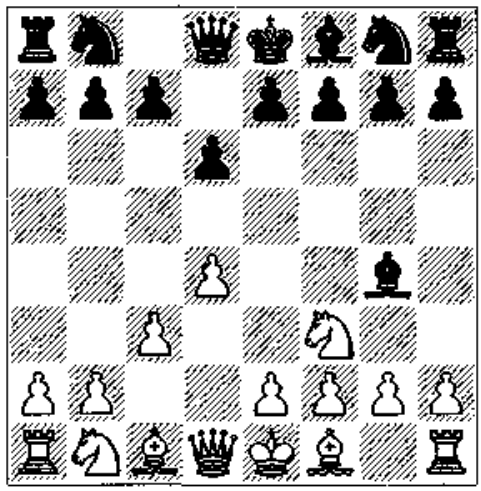
3 c3 *(D)*

3...♘d7

Or:

a) 3...♗xf3!? might not be very useful here, as White's pawn being on c3 improves his central pawn-structure, taking away Black's possible counterplay based on, for example, ...g6, ...♗g7 and ...♘c6: 4 exf3 ♘d7 (4...c6 5 ♗d3 e6 6 ♗f4 ♘e7 7 ♕b3 ♘d5 8 ♗g3 ♕b6 9 ♕c2 ♘d7 10 ♘d2 ♘7f6 11 ♘c4 ♕c7 12 ♘e3 ± Ledger-Barton, London 1995) 5 ♗d3 g6 6 ♗g5 h6 7 ♗e3 ♗g7 8 ♕c2 ♘gf6 9 ♘d2 0-0 10 ♕b3 c5 11 ♕xb7 cxd4 12 cxd4 ♖b8 13 ♕xa7 ♖a8 14 ♕b7 ♖b8 15 ♕a6 ♖xb2 16 ♖b1 ♕b8 17 ♔e2 ♘d5 is unclear, Ferry-Moingt, Montpellier 1991.

B



b) 3...c6 4 ♘bd2 ♘d7 5 e4 e6 (5...e5?! 6 ♗c4 ♘gf6 7 ♕b3) 6 ♗e2 d5 is simple and good – compare Line B1 of Chapter 15.

4 e4

Alternatively:

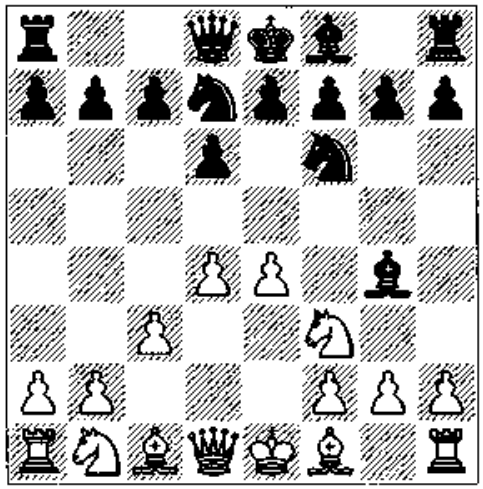
a) 4 ♕b3 ♖b8 5 ♘bd2 ♘gf6 6 h3 ♗h5 7 g4 ♗g6 8 ♘h4 e5 9 ♘xg6 hxg6 10 ♗g2 c6 11 ♘f3 ♗e7 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♗e3 ♕a5 14 ♖d1 ♘d5 15 ♘g5 ♗xg5 16 ♗xd5 cxd5 17 ♗xg5 ♘b6 18 ♔f1 0-0 = Radosević-Vaulin, Belgrade 1993.

b) 4 ♘bd2 e6 5 e4 d5 6 ♗d3 dxe4 7 ♘xe4 ♘gf6 8 h3 ♗h5 9 ♗g5 ♗e7 10 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 11 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 12 ♗e4 c6 13 ♕b3 ♕f4 14 ♘d2 ♖b8 15 g3 ♕d6 16 0-0 0-0 17 ♖fe1 ♖fd8 = Kurr-Shaw, Hastings Challengers 1995/6.

c) 4 h3 ♗h5 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 ♘gf6 7 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 8 ♕b3 ♕c8 9 ♘bd2 ♗g6 10 g3 e6 11 ♗g2 c6 12 0-0 ♗e7 13 a4 0-0 14 ♖fe1 ♕c7 15 e4 ♘d7 16 e5 d5 17 c4 dxc4 18 ♘xc4 ♘b6 ∓ Silva-Santos, Lisbon 1996.

4...♘gf6 *(D)*

W



5 ♘bd2

5 ♗d3 e5 6 0-0 ♗e7 7 ♘bd2 0-0 8 ♖e1 c6 9 h3 ♗h5 10 ♘f1 exd4 11 cxd4 d5 12 e5 ♘e4 13 ♗xe4 dxe4 14 ♖xe4 ♘c5 15 ♖e3 ♘e6 16 ♘1h2 ♗c5 17 ♖d3 ♗g6 18 ♖d2 ♗b6 19 b3 ♕d5 gives Black good compensation, Backwinkel-Tischbierek, Bundesliga 1992/3.

5...c6

Otherwise:

a) 5...e6 6 ♗e2 (6 ♗d3 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♖e1 e5 9 ♘f1 ♗h5 10 ♘g3 ♗g6 11 ♘h4 d5 12 ♘xg6 hxg6 13 ♕b3 dxe4 14 ♘xe4 exd4 15 cxd4 ♘b6 16 ♗g5 ♖b8 = Jurica-Novak, Slovakian Cht 1997/8) 6...♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♘e1 ♗xe2 9 ♕xe2 c5 10 e5 ½-½ Robatsch-Mokry, Austrian Cht 1991.

b) 5...e5 6 ♗e2 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 is also possible.

6 h3 ♗xf3 7 ♕xf3 e5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♗d3 ♗e7 10 ♗c2 0-0

Black is well developed.

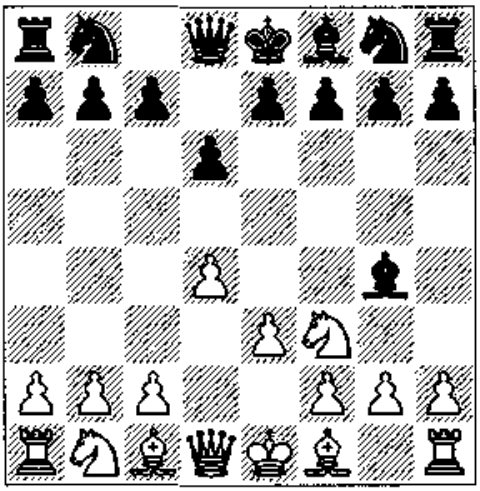
11 ♘f1 ♘e8 12 h4 ♘d6 13 ♗g5 ♘c4 14 ♘e3 ♘xe3 15 ♗xe3 ♘c5 16 0-0 ♘e6 17 ♖fd1 ♕c7 18 g3 ♗c5 19 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 20 ♕e3 b6

= Nikolić-Adams, Burgas 1993.

F)

3 e3 *(D)*

B



3...e6!?

Black can continue in a flexible manner, sometimes reaching positions similar to a Queen's Gambit or Slav by playing ...d5.

a) 3...♘d7 4 c4 e5 5 ♘c3 transposes to Line D1 of Chapter 12.

b) 3...♘c6!? is sometimes reached via the move-order 1...♘c6 2 ♘f3 d6 3 e3 ♗g4, and it is a possible alternative for Black; for example, 4 ♗e2 e5 (4...♘f6 5 ♘bd2 ♕d7 6 c3 e5 7 0-0 e4 8 ♘e1 h5 9 f3 exf3 10 ♘dxf3 d5 11 ♗b5 ♗d6 12 ♕a4 0-0 13 ♘d3 ♗xf3 14 ♖xf3 ♘e4 15 ♘f4 ♗xf4 16 ♖xf4 g5 17 ♖f1 f5 is much better for Black,

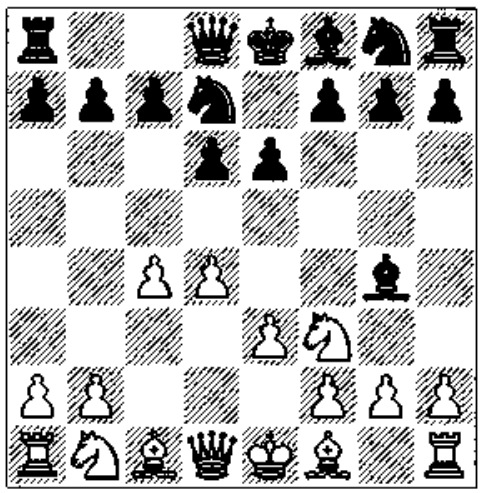
Kilpio-Fant, Gausdal 1991) 5 c4 f5 6 ♘c3 e4 7 ♘d2 ♗xe2 8 ♕xe2 ♘f6 9 0-0 g6 10 f3 exf3 11 ♘xf3 looks good for White; for example, 11...♗e7 (or 11...♗g7 12 d5 ♘e5 13 ♘d4 ±) 12 e4 fxe4 13 ♘xe4 0-0 (Andreev-Pantaleev, Bulgarian Ch (Sofia) 1960) 14 ♘eg5 ±.

4 c4

4 ♗e2 c6 5 0-0 ♘f6 6 c4 d5! reaches a QGD-type position where Black has no problems: 7 ♘c3 ♗d6 8 c5 ♗c7 9 b4 0-0 10 a4 a6 11 ♗b2 ♘bd7 12 ♕c2 ♗f5 13 ♗d3 ♗xd3 14 ♕xd3 e5 = Uhlendorf-Sautter, Bundesliga wom 1992/3.

4...♘d7 *(D)*

4...c6 5 ♘c3 (5 ♕b3 ♕b6 6 ♗e2 ♘d7 7 ♘c3 d5 8 0-0 ♘gf6 9 ♗d2 ♗e7 10 ♖fc1 ♘e4 = Bochev-Andonov, Bankia 1992) 5...♘f6 6 ♗e2 ♗e7 7 d5!? 0-0 8 0-0 ♘a6 9 dxe6 ♗xe6 10 ♘d4 ♗d7 11 ♕c2 ♖e8 12 ♖d1 ♗f8 13 a3 g6 14 b4 ♘c7 15 ♗b2 ♕e7 16 ♘b3 ♖ad8 17 ♘a5 ♗c8 = Karlsson-Gausel, Oslo 1988.



W

5 ♘c3

5 ♗e2 ♘gf6 6 ♘c3 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 e4 e5 (play has transposed to an Old Indian) 9 ♗e3 c6 10 d5 cxd5 11 cxd5 ♗xf3 12 ♗xf3 ♕b8 13 a4 ♖c8 14 ♕b1 ♗d8! 15 ♖c1 ♗b6 ∓ Wirthensohn-Korchnoi, Lugano 1989.

5...♗e7

5...♘gf6 6 h3 ♗h5 (6...♗xf3 7 ♕xf3 c6 is a recommendation of Curt Hansen, with a very stable though slightly passive position for Black) 7 g4 ♗g6 8 ♘h4 c6 9 ♗g2 d5 is a Slav-type position. White gained a slight advantage after 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 ♘xg6 hxg6 12 g5 ♘g8 13 e4! dxe4 14 ♗xe4 ♗d6 15 ♗xb7 ♖b8 16 ♗g2 ♘e7 17 0-0 ♘b6 18 ♘b5 a6 19 ♘xd6+ ♕xd6 20 ♕e2 in Keitlinghaus-Klarić, Prague 1990.

6 h3

6 ♗e2 c6 7 d5!? (7 0-0 a6 8 b3 ♘gf6 9 ♗b2 d5 10 ♘d2 ♗xe2 11 ♕xe2 0-0 12 e4 dxe4 13 ♘cxe4 ♘xe4 14 ♘xe4 ♘f6 15 ♖fd1 ½-½ Ziiger-Lau, Graz 1993) 7...e5 8 dxc6 bxc6 9 ♕a4 ♕c8 10 h3 ♗f5 11 e4 ♗g6 12 ♗e3 ♘gf6 13 c5 dxc5 14 ♘h4 0-0 15 ♘xg6 hxg6 16 ♕c2 c4 17 ♗xc4 ♗c5 18 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 19 0-0 ♕c7 = Korchnoi-Miles, Horgen 1994.

6...♗h5

6...♗xf3!?.

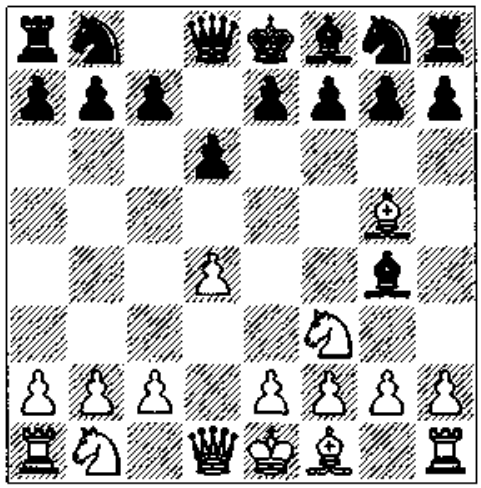
7 g4 ♗g6 8 h4 h6 9 h5 ♗h7 10 ♗d3 ♗xd3 11 ♕xd3 ♘gf6 12 ♖g1 c6 13 ♗d2

½-½ Portisch-Speelman, Reykjavik 1988.

G)

3 ♗g5 *(D)*

This move is not very logical here, as Black has not played ...♘f6 yet.



3...♘d7

Or:

a) 3...c6 4 ♘bd2 (4 e3?? ♗xf3 5 ♕xf3 ♕a5+ 0-1 Frosch-Peisser, Leiner 1996, is too good to be true) 4...h6 5 ♗h4 g5 6 ♗g3 ♘f6 7 h4 ♘h5 8 ♘e4 f5 9 ♘h2 fxe4 10 ♘xg4 ♘xg3 11 fxg3 ♗g7 12 e3 ♘d7 is a typical Torre-type mess, Patuzzo-Brunner, Silvaplana 1993.

b) 3...h6!? 4 ♗h4 ♘d7 5 ♘bd2 ♘gf6 6 h3 ♗f5 7 e3 makes it possible to develop the bishop to h7, where it functions well together with the plan of ...e6 and ...d5: 7...♗h7 8 ♗c4 e6 9 c3 ♗e7 10 ♕e2 d5 11 ♗d3 ♘e4 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 ♘e5 ♘xe5 14 dxe5 ♘xd2 15 ♗xh7 ♘c4 16 ♗c2 ♘xe5 ∓ Springer-Wockenfuss, Passau 1998.

4 ♘bd2

4 e4 c6 5 ♕d2 ♕b6 6 c4 g6 7 ♘c3 ♗g7 8 ♗e3 ♗xf3 9 gxf3 ♘gf6 (another idea is 9...c5!?) 10 ♗e2 ♕c7 11 f4 c5 12 d5 ± Kekki-Couso, Helsinki 1997.

4...h6!

It is already possible for Black to try active plans. He can also play it safe: 4...♘gf6 5 e4 h6 6 ♗f4 e5 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♗e3 ♗c5 9 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 ♕xf3 ♕d4 12 c3 ♕a4 13 b4 ♘e6 = Marszalek-Vorotnikov, Moscow 1991.

5 ♗h4 g5 6 ♗g3 ♗g7

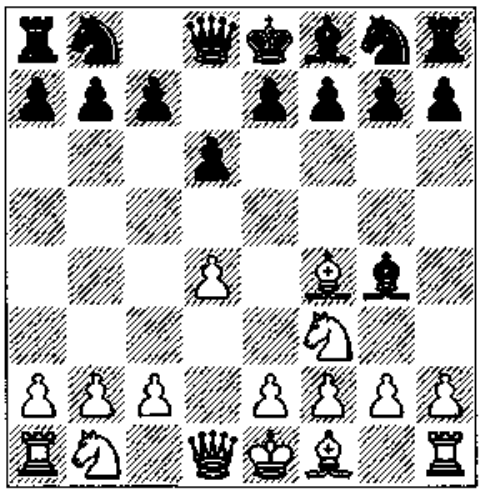
Black has an active position.

7 c3 f5!? 8 e3 e5 9 h3 ♗h5 10 ♕b3 f4 11 ♗h2 ♘gf6 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 exf4 exf4 14 0-0-0 ♗f7 15 ♖e1+ ♔f8

∓ Piankov-Vorotnikov, Moscow 1996.

H)

3 ♗f4 *(D)*



3...♗xf3

3...♘f6 4 ♘bd2 ♘h5!? (4...e6 is also a safe move, intending to meet 5 e4 with 5...d5) 5 ♗g5 (5 ♗e3 ♘d7 6 h3 ♗xf3 7 ♘xf3 e5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♕d5 c6 10 ♕b3 ♕c7 11 g3 ♘hf6 12 ♗g2 ♘d5 13 0-0, Cibulka-Dolezal, Czech Republic 1992, 13...♘xe3 =) 5...h6 6 ♗h4 g5 7 ♗g3 ♗g7 8 c3 ♘c6 9 e3 e5 10 ♗b5 0-0 11 0-0 ♘e7 12 h3 ♘xg3 13 fxg3 ♗d7 = Teichmann-Chigorin, Karlsbad 1907.

4 exf3

4 gxf3 g6!? 5 e4 ♗g7 6 c3 ♘d7 7 ♕b3 ♖b8 8 ♘d2 ♘gf6 9 ♖d1 0-0 10 ♗e2 a6 11 ♘c4 d5 12 ♘d2 e6 13 c4 ♘h5 14 ♗e3 c5! ∓ Kieboom-Hodgson, San Bernardino 1992.

4...♘d7

Black has many other playable moves and plans:

a) 4...e6 5 ♗d3 ♘c6 6 c3 d5 7 ♕c2 ♗d6 8 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 9 ♘d2 ♘f6 10 0-0 0-0 11 b4 a6 12 ♘b3 b6 13 ♖fe1 ♖fe8 14 ♖e3 e5 ∓ Kagan-West, Melbourne 1990.

b) 4...c6 5 c3 ♘d7 6 ♗d3 e6 7 0-0 d5 8 ♗g3 g6 9 ♖e1 ♗g7 10 f4 ♘e7 11 ♗h4 ♘f6 12 ♘d2 0-0 gives Black a position without weaknesses, De Sallier-Nelis, Val Thorens 1994.

5 ♗c4

5 ♘c3 c6 6 ♗c4 is not natural, as after 6...d5 7 ♗b3 e6 8 0-0 Black has a safe structure, though the following variation is anything but quiet: 8...g5!? 9 ♗e3 ♗d6 10 ♘e2 h6 11 c4 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♕c7 13 h3 ♘e7 14 ♖c1 ♘b6 15 ♗b3 0-0-0 16 d5 ♘exd5 17 ♗xd5 ♘xd5 18 ♗xa7 ♗f4 19 ♘xf4 ♘xf4 ∓ Vasilev-Delchev, Dupnica 1998.

5...c6

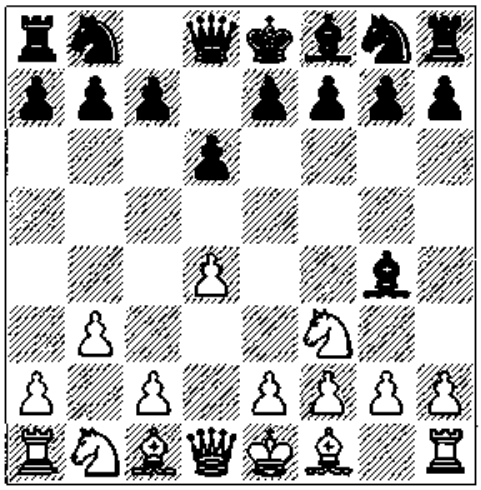
5...e6 6 0-0 d5 is equivalent.

6 0-0 d5 7 ♗b3 e6 8 ♘d2 ♕f6 9 ♗e3 ♗d6 10 c4 ♘e7 11 ♖e1 0-0 12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♘f1 ♘f5 14 ♕d3 ♖fe8 15 ♗c2 g6 16 ♘g3 ♘g7

∓ Gralka-Kiedrowicz, Augustow 1996.

I)

3 b3 *(D)*



B

3...♘f6

3...♗xf3 is the most testing move, though it has only been played a couple of times: 4 exf3 (4 gxf3 g6 5 ♘c3?! ♗g7 6 ♘e4 d5 7 ♘c5 b6 8 ♘a4 e6 9 ♗f4 ♘e7 10 h4 ♘f5 11 ♗g5 ♕d6 12 c3 h6 13 ♗c1 e5 ∓ Kapp-Spiess, Chemnitz 1998) 4...g6 5 ♗b2 ♗g7 6 ♕d2 d5 (6...c5!?) 7 ♘c3 ♘c6 8 ♗b5 ♘f6 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♗xc6 bxc6 11 ♖fe1 ♘e8 12 ♘a4 ♘d6 13 ♖ad1 e6 14 ♘c5 ♖e8 15 ♘d3 ± Stobik-Ksieski, 2nd Bundesliga 1995/6.

4 ♘bd2

4 ♗b2 e6 5 ♘bd2 ♗e7 6 g3 c5 7 ♗g2 ♘c6 8 0-0 cxd4 9 ♘xd4 ♖c8 10 ♘c4 0-0 11 ♕d2 d5 12 ♘xc6 bxc6 13 ♘e5 ♗h5 = Sorri-Kanko, Helsinki 1989.

4...e5!? 5 ♘c4

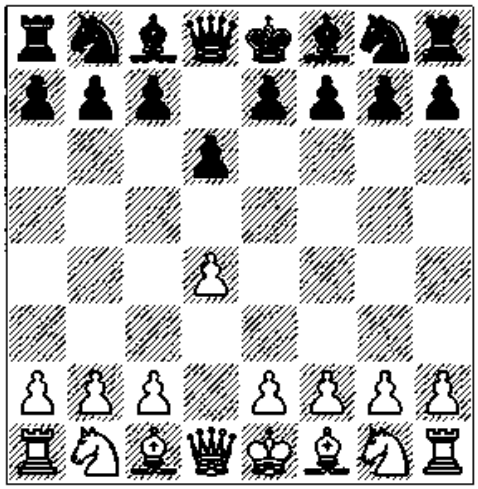
5 dxe5 dxe5 6 ♗b2 (not 6 ♘xe5?? ♕d4 −+) is a better option for White, but Black gets activity and good compensation after 6...e4 7 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 8 ♘xe4 ♗b4+ 9 ♘fd2 ♗xd2+ 10 ♘xd2 ♘c6.

5...e4 6 ♘fd2 d5 7 ♘e3 ♗e6 8 ♗b2 ♗d6 9 c4 c6 10 g3 h5

∓ Heuser-Chekhov, Dresden 1997.

17 Other 2nd Moves for White: Introduction

In the next two chapters we study White's other options on the 2nd move (apart from 2 e4) after 1 d4 d6 *(D)*.



Firstly, there are 'serious' moves, which have scored well for White, and there are 'odd' moves that are seen only occasionally. Another way to divide up the moves is to consider those that aim for a concrete opening plan, and those that are of a more flexible nature.

The move 1...d6 is also flexible, introducing no direct contact between the armies of White and Black, and because of this flexibility there are still many transpositions available in these rare variations. Especially against the move 2 g3 Black has many transpositional possibilities.

Statistics

Below we have collected some statistics for White's 2nd moves. We have used these statistics to partition the material

Variation	Games	W's Score	W's Rating	W's Performance
2 g3	410	55%	2391	2422
2 ♗g5	125	58%	2364	2446
2 ♘c3	68	49%	2339	2357
2 c3	44	52%	2375	2397
2 ♗f4	37	39%	2259	2244
2 e3	27	33%	2157	2078
2 f4	6	33%	2345	2145

into two chapters, the first of which covers the 'serious' alternatives with the second covering the odds and ends.

Position-types

Black usually has many different plans available in these variations, since the theory goes far less deep than in the main lines, where the play might focus on some variations that have been proved to be critical. This means that Black can choose the position-type quite freely. Below we summarize these various plans to give the reader an overview of which plan to choose and when.

1) Black plays an immediate ...e5 – endgame positions: 2 g3 with a slight advantage to White; 2 ♘c3, 2 b3 or 2 e3 with equality.

2) Black plays a later ...e5 – Old Indian / advanced centre positions: 2 ♗f4 with an unclear position; 2 c3 or 2 e3 with normal positions; 2 f4 with an advantage to Black.

3) Black plays ...c5 – Benoni positions: 2 ♗g5 or 2 ♗f4 with equality.

4) Black plays ...f5 – Dutch positions: 2 g3 with likely transpositions to main lines of the Dutch.

5) Black plays ...h6 and ...g5 – flank positions: 2 ♗g5 with an active position for Black.

18 Serious Alternatives for White

1 d4 d6

We regard the 2nd move alternatives for White presented in this chapter as serious tries for an opening advantage. Especially the flexible 2 g3 offers some chances of an advantage against the thematic endgame system, and against other plans by Black there exist many different transpositions. The Torre/Trompowsky-type move 2 ♗g5 might be a valuable tool for a Torre specialist. 2 ♘c3 can also lead to the endgame system, if Black wishes, but otherwise there are many transpositions, for example to a pure Pirc, available.

We discuss these moves as follows:

A: 2 g3 151
B: 2 ♗g5 156
C: 2 ♘c3 157

A)

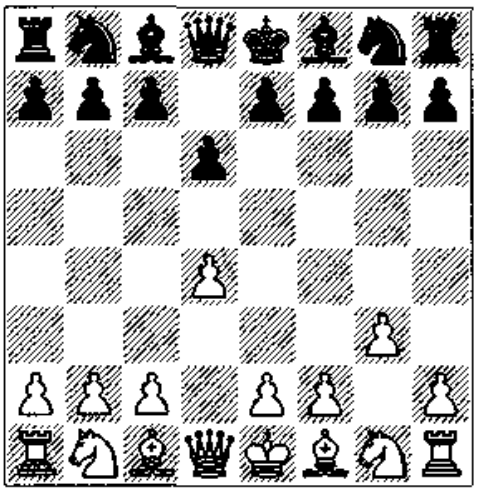
2 g3 *(D)*

This developing move is a very natural and flexible choice for White. Black has two basic ideas: either he transposes to another opening, hoping to get a variation White doesn't usually play, or he tests the ending presented in the main line.

2...e5

Alternatively:

B



a) 2...g6 is likely to reach Modern or King's Indian positions, with White committed to a king's fianchetto.

b) 2...f5 is a form of Dutch, but Black has avoided the Staunton Gambit, and a number of other sharp possibilities.

c) 2...♘f6 aims for King's Indian or Old Indian positions.

d) 2...♘d7!? 3 ♗g2 e5 is a way to play the thematic ...e5 without allowing White the ending. Then:

d1) 4 e4 g6 5 ♘e2 ♗g7 6 ♘bc3 ♘gf6 7 h3 0-0 transposes to a line of the g3 Pirc, but not the one we recommend for Black in Line C3 of Chapter 25. However, Black's position is solid here; for example, 8 ♗e3 c6 9 a4 b6 10 0-0 ♗b7 11 ♕d2 ♕c7 12 ♖ad1 ♖ad8

13 ♗g5 ♖fe8, J.Müller-Helbig, 2nd Bundesliga 1996/7.

d2) 4 c4 exd4 5 ♕xd4 ♘gf6 6 ♘c3 g6 7 ♘f3 ♗g7 leads to positions that can arise via 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘c3, though the move-order is a bit rare. Play can continue:

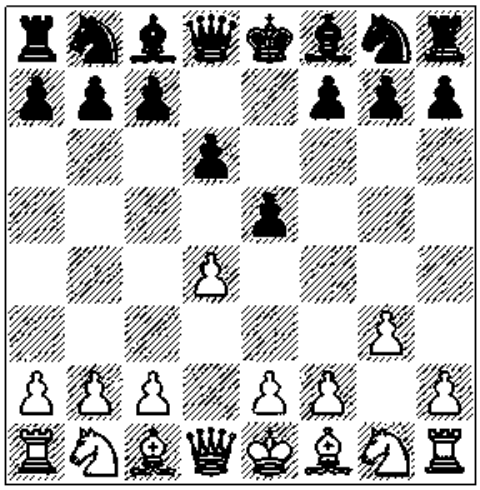
d21) 8 b3 0-0 9 ♗b2 ♖e8 10 ♕d2 ♘c5 11 0-0 a5 12 ♘d4 c6 (12...a4 13 ♖ad1 axb3 14 axb3 c6 = Rumpl-Beikert, Austria 1998) 13 ♖ab1 a4 14 e3 axb3 15 axb3 ♘fe4 16 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 17 ♕c2 f5 18 ♖a1 ♖xa1 19 ♖xa1 ♗d7 = Adorjan-Smejkal, Szirak 1986.

d22) 8 ♕e3+ ♕e7 and then:

d221) 9 ♘b5 ♕xe3 10 ♗xe3 ♔d8 11 h3 a6 12 ♘c3 ♖e8 13 ♖c1 ♘c5 14 0-0 ♘fe4 15 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♘g5 ♘xg5 17 ♗xg5+ f6 18 ♗e3 ♗e6 19 c5 c6 20 ♖fd1 d5 21 ♗d4 ♔e7 22 e3 ♔f7 = Christiansen-Ree, Wijk aan Zee 1982.

d222) 9 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 10 ♗e3 c6 11 ♖c1 ♘g4 12 ♗g5+ ♗f6 13 ♗xf6+ ♘gxf6 14 ♘d4 h5 15 h3 ♘b6 16 b3 a5 17 0-0 a4 is equal although Black enjoys the initiative, Toth-Tischbierek, Bundesliga 1998/9.

We now return to 2...e5 *(D)*: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3 dxe5

Or:

a) 3 ♘f3 is best answered by 3...e4, which leads to the position-type studied after 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3, although here Black has even better prospects due to the fact that his d-pawn can move to d5 without loss of time. White has two moves:

a1) 4 ♘fd2 ♘f6! (4...f5 5 c4 c6 6 ♘c3 ♘f6 is also possible; for example, 7 ♗g2 g6 8 f3 exf3 9 ♗xf3 ♗g7 10 0-0 ½-½ Steckner-Meyer, Hamburg 1992) 5 ♗g2 d5 6 c4 c6 7 ♘c3 ♘a6 8 cxd5 cxd5 9 0-0 ♘c7 10 f3 exf3 11 ♘xf3 ♗e7 12 ♗g5 0-0 13 ♕b3 ♘g4 14 ♗d2 h6 15 h3 ♘f6 16 ♘e5 ♗d6 17 ♘b5 ♘xb5 18 ♕xb5 ♕e7 19 ♖f2 ♗e6 20 ♖af1 ♘e4 21 ♗xe4 dxe4 22 ♔h2 ♖ac8 ∓ Pfleger-Miltner, 2nd Bundesliga 1994/5.

a2) 4 ♘g5 and then:

a21) 4...f5 5 f3!? (5 c4 ♗e7 6 ♘h3 c6 7 ♘c3, Kopylov-Rogers, Hamburg 1999, transposes to Chapter 2) 5...exf3 (5...d5!?) 6 exf3 ♗e7 7 ♕e2 c6 8 ♘c3 ♘a6 9 ♗f4 ♘c7 10 d5 cxd5 11 0-0-0 h6 12 ♘h3 ♘f6 13 ♗e3 g5 14 f4 g4 15 ♘f2 ♔f7 16 h3 h5 17 ♗g2 ± Grün-Hümmer, Bundesliga 1990/1.

a22) 4...d5 and now:

a221) 5 ♗g2 h6 6 ♘h3 g6 7 c4 c6 8 ♘c3 ♘e7 9 0-0 ♗g7 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 f3 f5 (11...exf3!?) 12 fxe4 dxe4 13 e3 0-0 14 ♘f4 ♔h7 is at least equal for Black, Bonnafous-Hari, Murek jr Ech 1998.

a222) 5 c4 ♗e7 6 ♘h3 dxc4!? 7 ♕a4+ ♘c6 8 e3 ♘f6 9 ♗d2 0-0 10 ♕xc4 a5 (10...♗g4!? looks good) 11

♗g2 ♗e6 12 ♕c2 ♘b4 13 ♗xb4 axb4 14 ♘d2 ♘d5 15 ♕xe4 with a slight advantage for White, Pichler-Spreng, Tirschenreuth 1982.

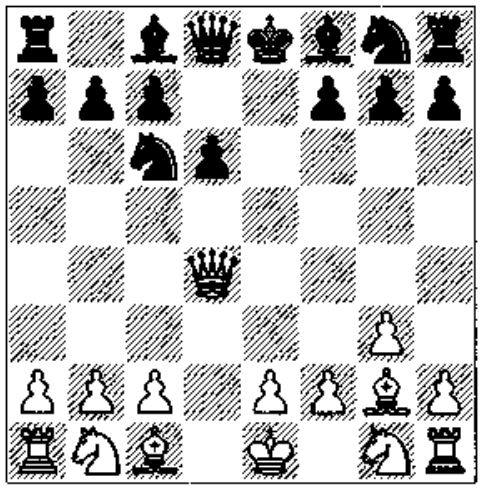
b) 3 ♗g2 allows Black to take control of the centre with 3...exd4. Then:

b1) 4 ♘f3 offers Black a gambit pawn. He can choose a reply according to taste:

b11) 4...♘c6 5 ♘xd4 ♗d7 6 b3 ♘f6 7 c4 is a safe continuation for Black: 7...♕c8!? (this active plan works well here) 8 0-0 ♗h3 9 ♘c3 ♗xg2 10 ♔xg2 ♗e7 11 ♗b2 0-0 (11...h5!?) 12 e4 ♘xd4 13 ♕xd4 c6 14 ♖fe1 ♕c7 is equal, Teske-Perez, Cienfuegos 1997.

b12) 4...c5 5 c3 dxc3 6 ♘xc3 ♘f6 7 0-0 ♗e7 8 e4 ♘c6 9 ♗f4 0-0 10 ♖e1 ♗g4 11 h3 ♗xf3 12 ♕xf3 ♖e8 13 ♕d1 ♕a5 14 ♗e3 ♖ad8 15 f4 b5 16 ♔h2 ♗f8 17 ♗f2 ♕b6 18 ♕d3 with some positional compensation, Epishin-Chatalbashev, Cutro 1999.

b2) 4 ♕xd4 places the white queen in the centre, and Black can win a tempo with 4...♘c6 *(D)* (4...♘f6!? is also possible: 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 c3 0-0 7 ♘f3 ♖e8 8 0-0 ♘c6 9 ♕d3 h6 10 ♗f4 and now Black implemented a standard plan to attack the e4-pawn with 10...♘d7 11 e4 ♗f6 12 ♘bd2 ♘c5 13 ♕c2 ♕e7 14 ♘e1 ♗g4 15 f3 ♗d7 16 ♖d1 a5 17 ♘c4 ♘e5 18 ♘xe5 dxe5 19 ♗e3 ♗b5 20 ♖f2 ♗g5 21 ♗xg5 hxg5 ∓ in Schouten-Borm, Leeuwarden 1975) and here:


W

b21) 5 ♕d2 ♘f6 and now:

b211) 6 c4 ♗e6 is problematic for White.

b212) 6 b3 d5! gives Black better chances in the centre; for example, 7 ♘c3 ♗e6 8 ♗b2 ♗b4 9 a3 ♗a5 10 b4 ♗b6 11 ♘a4 0-0 12 ♘xb6 axb6 13 ♘h3 ♗xh3 14 ♗xh3 ♖e8 15 ♗g2 ♘e5 16 ♗d4 ♘c4 17 ♕c3 c6 18 e3 ♘d6 19 ♕d3 ♘g4 20 0-0 ♘e5 21 ♕e2 b5 ∓ Galliamova-Vaulin, Koszalin 1997.

b213) 6 ♘h3 g6 7 ♘f4 ♗g7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♘c3 ♖e8 10 ♖e1 ♘e5 11 b3 c6 12 ♗b2 d5 = Donchenko-Chekhov, Moscow 1996.

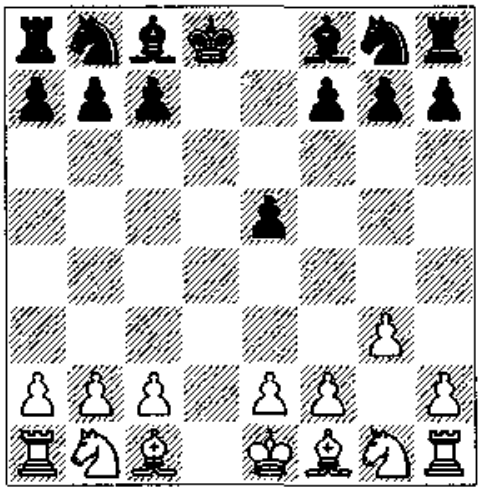
b214) 6 ♘f3 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♘c3 ♘e5 9 b3 c6 10 ♗b2 ♘xf3+ 11 ♗xf3 d5 12 ♖ad1 ♗f5 = Iglesias-Szmetan, San Luis 1995.

b22) 5 ♕d1 g6 6 ♗d2 (6 ♘f3 ♗g7 7 c3 ♘ge7 8 ♘bd2 ♗d7 9 ♘b3 ♕c8 10 e4 0-0 11 0-0 ♗g4 12 ♕c2 ♕d7 13 ♘bd4 ♖ae8 ∓ Tennstedt-Lorenz, 2nd Bundesliga 1994/5) 6...♗g7 7 ♗c3 ♘f6 8 ♘f3 ♗f5 gives Black a very active position. He had no problems after 9 ♘d4 ♘xd4 10 ♕xd4 c6 11 e4 ♗e6 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♘d2 b5 14 b3 ♕b6 15 a4 ♕xd4 16 ♗xd4 a6 = in Korniushin-Vorotnikov, Vladivostok 1994.

b23) 5 ♕e3+ ♗e7 6 ♘f3 ♘f6 7 0-0 0-0 8 c4 ♗e6 is also OK for Black, as White's pieces are poorly coordinated:

9 ♘a3 ♘g4 10 ♕d2 ♘ge5 11 b3 ♘xf3+ 12 ♗xf3 ♗f6 13 ♗b2 ♖b8 14 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 15 ♘b5 ♕e7 16 ♗g2 ♕d7 17 ♖fe1 a6 18 ♘c3 b5 with active play for Black, Romanishin-Tomczak, 2nd Bundesliga 1991/2.

3...dxe5 4 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 *(D)*



Now Black has many options. His basic plan is to develop, put the king in a safe place (usually c7), and fight to maintain control over the vital e5-square.

5 ♘c3

Or:

a) 5 ♘d2?! is illogical, as it blocks in the c1-bishop. 5...c6 and now:

a1) 6 ♘c4 f6 7 f4 ♗e6 8 e4 ♘d7 9 ♘f3 b5 10 ♘a5 (this plan might be too aggressive, as the knight remains out of play on a5 for a long time) 10...♔c7 11 c3 ♗c5 12 fxe5 ♘xe5 13 ♗f4 ♗d6 14 0-0-0 g5 15 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 16 ♔c2 ♘h6 17 ♘xe5 fxe5 18 ♗e2 ♖hf8 ∓ Kistella-Matthaei, 2nd Bundesliga 1994/5.

a2) 6 f4 ♗d6 (6...exf4!?) 7 ♘gf3 ♘d7 8 ♘e4 ♗c7 9 ♗d2 f5 10 ♘eg5 ♔e7 11 fxe5 h6 12 e6 ♘c5 13 ♗b4 hxg5 14 ♗xc5+ ♔f6 15 ♗d4+ ♔g6 16 ♗e5 ♗xe5 17 ♘xe5+ ♔f6 18 ♘f7 ♖h7 19 ♘d6 ♗xe6 20 ♗g2 g6 21 0-0-0 ♔e5 = Lerner-Sulskis, Koszalin 1999.

b) 5 ♗g2 c6 6 f4!? has the thematic idea of taking the safe c7-square away from the black king, but it is not so effective because of 6...exf4 (6...♘d7 7 ♘f3 ♗d6 8 ♘bd2 exf4 9 ♘c4 ♗c7 10 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 11 gxf4 ♘gf6 12 0-0-0 ♔e7 13 ♖d4 ♘c5 ± Draško-Jacimović, Yugoslav Cht (Cetinje) 1992) 7 ♗xf4 ♘e7! 8 ♘c3 ♘g6 9 0-0-0+ ♘d7 10 ♘f3 ♘xf4 11 gxf4 ♗b4 12 ♘e4 ♔e7 13 ♖d4 ♗a5 14 ♘d6 ♗b6 with a slight advantage for Black, Shneider-Bagirov, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1991.

c) 5 f4!? is the most direct approach, and it also seems to test Black most: 5...exf4 6 ♗xf4 ♗d6 7 ♗xd6 cxd6 leads to an instructive position, which Black should be able to hold; for example, 8 ♘c3 ♘f6 9 ♖d1 ♔e7 10 ♘b5 ♘e8 11 ♗g2 ♘c6 12 ♘h3 a6 13 ♘d4 ♘e5 (13...♗xh3!?) 14 ♘f4 ♘f6 15 b3 ♖b8 16 0-0 ♗d7 17 ♖d2 ♖hc8 18 ♘d3 ♘c6 19 ♖f4 ♖c7 20 c4 ♘xd4 21 ♖xd4 ♗c6 22 ♘b4 ♗xg2 23 ♔xg2 ♖d8 ± Reschke-Lorenz, Bundesliga 1997/8.

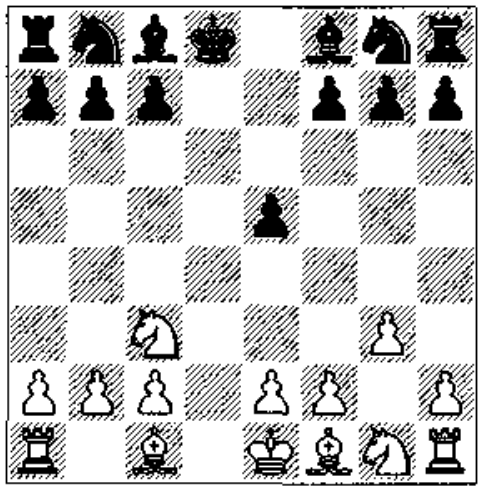
We now return to 5 ♘c3 *(D)*:

5...♘d7

Or:

a) 5...♗d6 6 ♗g2 c6 7 ♘e4 ♔e7 8 ♘xd6 ♔xd6 is too risky, as White can either open the centre or activate his pieces too quickly: 9 f4 ♗e6 10 ♘f3 e4 11 ♘g5 f5 12 b3 h6 13 ♗a3+ ♔d7 14 0-0-0+ ♗d5 15 ♘f7 ♖h7 16 c4 +– Rausis-Cruz, Lisbon 1999.

B



b) 5...f6, with the principled plan of holding on to the strong point e5, is possible, though 6 f4! ♗d6 7 ♘f3 ♘c6 8 ♗d2 ♘ge7 9 0-0-0 h6 10 ♗g2 ♗e6 11 ♗e3 ♔e8 12 fxe5 fxe5 13 ♘e4 ± K.Arkell-Dunnington, London 1992, is slightly problematic for Black.

c) 5...♗e6!? is probably the best try for Black, when there is a new game that changes the old evaluation: 6 f4 ♘d7 7 ♘f3 f6! 8 fxe5 ♘xe5 9 ♗f4 ♘g6! (this move, renouncing the e5-square but attacking the bishop, is best) 10 0-0-0+ ♔c8 11 ♗e3 ♘8e7 12 ♘d4 ♗d7 13 ♘db5 ♘e5! (13...♘c6? 14 ♖xd7! ± Romanishin-Kindermann, Munich 1992, is a good example of the tactical possibilities Black must be aware of) 14 ♗g2 c6 15 ♘xa7+!? (15 ♘d6+ ♔c7 =) 15...♔b8 and now White must seek complications, as his direct approach has not succeeded: 16 ♖xd7 ♘xd7 17 ♖d1 ♘f5 18 ♗g1 ♗c5 19 ♘xc6+ bxc6 20 ♗h3 ♗xg1 21 ♖xg1 ♘d4 22 ♗xd7 ♖xa2 23 ♘xa2 ♘xe2+ 24 ♔d1 ♘xg1 25 ♗xc6 ♘h3 ∓ ½-½ Romanishin-Sokolovs, Cappelle la Grande 1995.

d) 5...c6 6 f4 and again Black has many options:

d1) 6...♗b4!? 7 fxe5 (7 ♗d2 exf4 8 0-0-0 ♘f6 9 gxf4 ½-½ Godes-Oratovsky, Tel-Aviv 1993) 7...♗f5 8 ♗g5+ ♔c7 9 ♗f4 ♗e6 10 ♘f3 ♘e7 11 ♘g5 ♘d5 12 ♘xe6+ fxe6 13 ♗d2 ♗xc3 14 bxc3 ♘d7 15 ♗h3 ♖ae8 = Skomorokhin-Helbig, Mlada Boleslav 1992.

d2) 6...♗e6!? 7 fxe5 ♘d7 8 ♘f3 h6 9 ♗d2 g5 10 0-0-0 ♗g7 11 ♘d4 ♗xe5 12 ♘xe6+ fxe6 13 ♗h3 ♔e7 with an unclear position, Vandrey-Dudas, Budapest 1997. Black has managed to bring his king to a safe place, but White's bishops might still offer him some advantage.

e) 5...♗f5!? is an interesting idea, as after 6 e4 ♗e6 the long diagonal is blocked, and following 7 f4 ♗b4 8 ♘f3 ♘f6! 9 ♘g5 ♖e8 10 ♗e3 exf4 11 gxf4 ♗xc3+ 12 bxc3 ♗d5! Black suddenly has threats of his own; for example, 13 0-0-0 ♘bd7 14 ♗h3 ♗xe4 15 ♖hg1 ♗g6 16 ♗d4 ♔e7 17 ♗e5 ♘xe5 18 fxe5, ½-½ Bezold-Dutschak, Würzburg 1997, and now 18...♘h5 seems to be good for Black.

6 f4 ♘gf6

6...♗b4!? 7 ♘f3 f6 8 fxe5 ♘xe5 9 ♗f4 gives White some initiative.

7 ♘f3

7 fxe5!? has also been suggested.

7...♗d6 8 ♘b5 ♔e7 9 ♘xd6 cxd6 10 b3

White has some advantage due to his bishop-pair, but the unconventional pawn-structure gives Black some prospects for counterplay. After 10...♘d5!? 11 fxe5 ♘xe5 12 ♘xe5 dxe5, 13 ♗a3+ ♔f6 14 e4 ♘e3! 15 ♗d3 ♗h3! gave

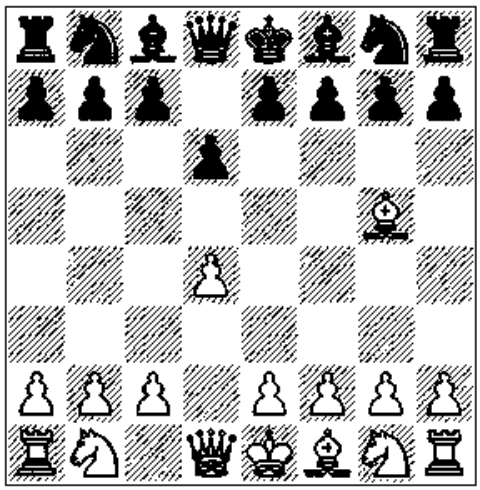
Black good counterplay in Yusupov-Rivas, Las Palmas 1993, but 13 e4!? and 13 ♗g2!? have been suggested as improvements.

Conclusion: 2 g3 is a very flexible move, with many transpositional possibilities. Black may have some problems in the endgame, so one of these transpositions might be the best choice.

B)

2 ♗g5 *(D)*

B



This move, in the spirit of the Trompowsky, is quite common. Again, Black has many possible transpositions, but our main game shows an independent alternative.

2...h6

Or:

a) 2...g6 3 ♘f3 is similar to Torre positions.

b) 2...♘d7 3 e4 ♘gf6 4 ♘c3 might transpose to a Pirc or Philidor.

c) 2...f5!? transposes to a line of the Dutch Defence, but this particular position is not very common.

d) 2...c5!? is another option worth noting. After 3 dxc5 (3 d5!?) 3...♕a5+ 4 ♘c3 ♕xc5 Black should be quite OK, though 5 ♕d2 h6 6 ♗f4 ♘f6 7 e4 a6 8 0-0-0 e5!? 9 ♗e3 ♕c7 10 f4 ♘bd7 11 ♘f3 ♗e7 12 ♘d5 ♘xd5 13 exd5 e4! 14 ♘d4 ♘f6 15 ♔b1 b5 (15...0-0!?) 16 c4 bxc4 17 ♖c1 ♘xd5 18 ♗xc4 ♕b7 19 ♘f5 was unclear in Komarov-Sakaev, Kherson 1991, as White has some activity for his pawn.

3 ♗h4 g5!?

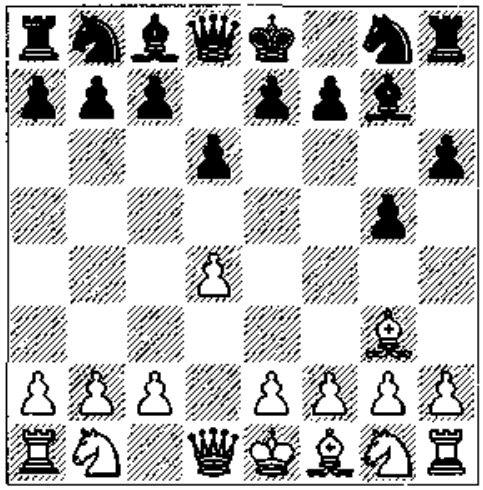
Black has scored well using this active move. Other, more positional moves:

a) 3...c6 4 c3 (4 ♘f3 ♕b6 5 ♘bd2 ♕xb2 is like the normal poisoned pawn line of the Torre Attack, but with the black d-pawn more flexibly placed on d6 than on d5: 6 ♖b1 ♕xa2 7 e4 ♕a5 8 ♗d3 g6 9 0-0 ♗g7 10 c4 ♘d7 11 ♖e1 ♕c7 12 ♗g3 e5 13 ♕c2 c5 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 ♘f1 ♘e7 16 ♘e3 0-0 ∓ Zwick-Werner, Lenk 1994) 4...♕b6 (4...♘d7 5 ♘d2 ♘gf6 6 ♘gf3 e5 7 e3 ♗e7 8 a4 is a safe Torre position, although 8...e4 9 ♘g1 g5 10 ♗g3 ♘f8 11 a5 ♘g6 12 h3 d5 13 ♕a4 0-0 14 ♘e2 ♘h5 15 ♗h2 f5 ∓ Kovačević-Benoit, Cannes 1993 illustrates some dangers for White) 5 ♕c2 ♘d7 6 ♘d2 ♘gf6 7 ♘gf3 g5!? 8 ♗g3 ♘h5 9 e4 ♗g7 10 a4 ♘f8 11 ♘c4 ♕c7 12 ♘e3 ♘g6 13 a5 ♗d7 is unclear, Kovačević-Belikov, Alcobendas 1993.

b) 3...♗f5!? is a sound possibility for Black; for example, 4 ♘c3 d5 5 e3 c6 6 ♗d3 ♗xd3 7 ♕xd3 ♘d7 8 e4 dxe4 9 ♘xe4 ♕a5+ 10 ♘d2 e6 11 ♘gf3 ♗e7 12 ♗g3 ♘gf6 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♘c4 ♕a6 15 ♖fd1 c5 with an equal

position, M.Gurevich-Azmaiparashvili, Manila OL 1992.

4 ♗g3 ♗g7 *(D)*



5 c3

5 e3 also leads to quiet play; for example, 5...c5 6 c3 ♕b6 7 ♕b3 ♕xb3 8 axb3 ♘d7 9 ♘a3 a6 10 ♘b5!? ♖b8 11 ♘a7 ♘gf6 12 ♗d3 ♘h5 13 ♘e2 ♘xg3 14 ♘xg3 ♘f6 15 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 16 ♘f5 ♗f8 = Boissonet-Nogueiras, Buenos Aires 1991.

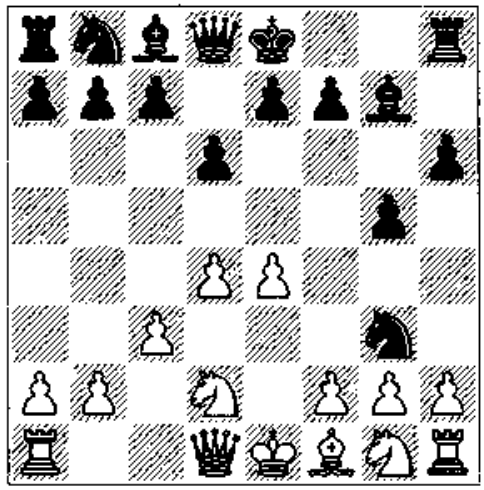
5...♘f6

5...f5!? should probably be recommended only to adventurous players, though there is nothing clearly wrong with it: 6 e3 ♘f6 7 ♘d2 ♘c6 8 h4 e5! 9 hxg5 hxg5 10 ♖xh8+ ♗xh8 11 ♕b3 f4 12 exf4 exf4 13 ♗h2 ♕e7+ 14 ♗e2 ♗d7 15 d5 ♘a5 16 ♕a3 b6 17 0-0-0 ♕h7! 18 ♘f1 ♕e4 and Black is active, Wells-Urban, Budapest 1993.

6 ♘d2 ♘h5 7 e4 ♘xg3 *(D)*

8 fxg3

8 hxg3 c6 9 ♕c2 ♘d7 gives rise to a Torre-type position, leading to some manoeuvring after 10 f4 ♘f8 11 ♗e2 ♕c7 12 ♗h5 c5 13 d5 ♘h7 14 ♗e2



♗d7 15 a4 0-0-0 16 ♗b5 e6 17 0-0-0 exd5 18 exd5 ♘f6 19 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 20 ♘c4 ♖he8 21 fxg5 hxg5 22 ♘f3 ♕g4 23 ♕d3 ♔c7 ∓ Czernicki-Slapikas, Polanica Zdroj 1996.

8...c5 9 d5 ♘d7 10 ♗e2 b5!? 11 ♗xb5 ♖b8 12 a4 a6 13 ♗xd7+ ♗xd7 14 ♘c4 ♖xb2 15 ♘xb2 ♗xc3+ 16 ♔f1 ♗xb2 17 ♖b1 ♗g7 18 h4 g4 19 ♕d3 0-0

Black has good compensation because of his active pieces, Patuzzo-Klauser, Swiss Cht 1996.

Conclusion: Black has at least two good ideas against 2 ♗g5, namely 2...h6 intending ...g5, and 2...c5.

C)

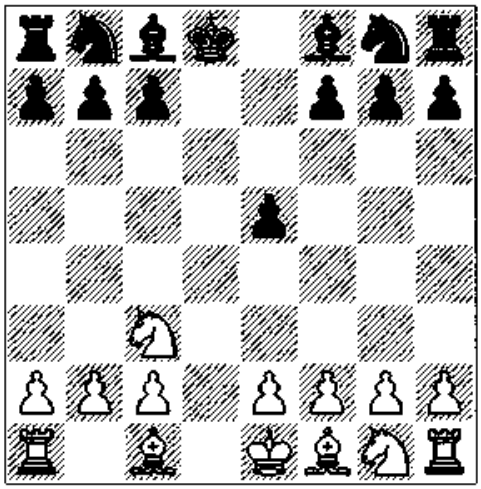
2 ♘c3 e5!?

Black can choose a transposition if he so wishes, but this thematic push seems to be enough to equalize.

2...g6 3 e4 ♘f6 transposes to a Pirc, as does 2...♘f6 after 3 e4, although Black should be careful about 3 ♗g5, which has similarities to the Trompowsky.

3 dxe5 dxe5 4 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 *(D)*

W



5 e4

Or:

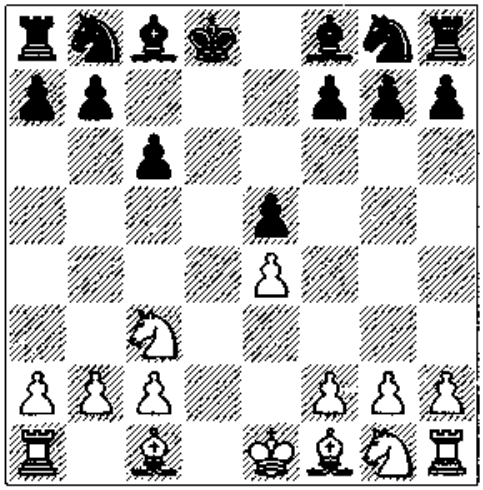
a) 5 ♘f3 f6 6 e4 (6 ♗d2 ♗c5 7 0-0-0 ♗d7 8 e3 ♘h6 9 ♗c4 ♘c6 10 a3 ♔e8 11 ♘e4 ♗b6 12 h3 ♖d8 13 ♗a2 ♔e7 14 ♘e1 ♗f5 15 ♘c3 ♗e6 with equality, Cuevas Rodriguez-Sanchez, Cienfuegos 1991) 6...♗e6 allows Black to use the standard plans and achieve easy equality: 7 ♗e3 ♘d7 8 ♘d2 c6 9 a4 ♔c7! 10 ♗c4 ♗xc4 11 ♘xc4 ♘b6 12 ♘xb6 axb6 13 ♔e2 ♗b4 ½-½ Rakić-Rukavina, Berlin 1988.

b) 5 f4! is the most active approach, and Black should be careful because the opening of lines may give White some attacking chances: 5...exf4 (5...♘c6 6 ♗d2 ♘ge7 7 ♘f3 f6 8 0-0-0 gives Black some problems: 8...exf4 9 ♗xf4+ ♗d7 10 g3 ♘c8 11 ♘b5 ♘d6 12 ♘xd6 ♗xd6 13 ♗xd6 cxd6 14 ♖xd6 ♔c7 15 ♖d2 ♖ae8 ± Arencibia-Ermenkov, Calcutta 1988) 6 ♗xf4 c6 7 0-0-0+ ♔e8! 8 ♘f3 ♘f6 9 e4 ♗b4 10 e5 ♗xc3 11 exf6 ♗xf6 12 ♗c4 ♗e6 13 ♖he1 ♘d7 14 ♗xe6 fxe6 15 ♖xe6+ ♔f7 16 ♖ed6 ♘b6 17 ♘e5+ ♗xe5 18 ♗xe5 ♖he8 = Khenkin-Appel, Leningrad 1991.

5...c6 *(D)*

5...♘f6 transposes to Line B of Chapter 33.

W



6 ♗c4 f6 7 ♗e3 ♔c7

Another queenless middlegame has arisen. Black has a stable position.

8 a4 ♗b4 9 ♘ge2 ♘d7 10 f3 a5 11 ♔f2 ♘e7 12 ♘a2 ♗c5 13 ♘ac1 ♗xe3+ 14 ♔xe3 ♘b6 15 ♗d3 ♗e6

∓ Söhnle-Villing, Baden 1992.

Conclusion: Black can choose between the endgame or a transposition to a Pirc.

19 Odds and Ends

In this chapter we study White's miscellaneous alternatives on the 2nd move. The best White can hope for with these moves is to transpose to other well-known systems. Black should have no theoretical problems against these moves, and they are presented here just so as to provide a full repertoire.

1 d4 d6

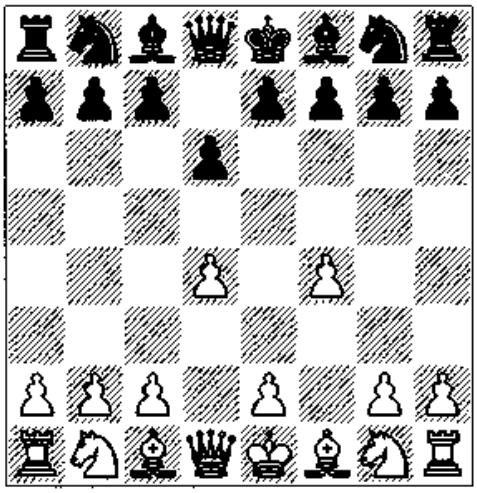
Now:

A:	**2 f4?!**	159
B:	**2 ♗f4**	160
C:	**2 c3**	161
D:	**2 b3**	162
E:	**2 e3**	162

A)

2 f4?! *(D)*

B



This move is simply bad, as Black's first move is a good preparation for a quick ...e5, which leaves White's centre destroyed after the premature f4.

2...♗g4!?

First Black prevents e4. There are other moves:

a) The paradoxical 2...d5 is possible, as White's f4 has its drawbacks in this type of position: 3 ♘f3 g6 4 e3 ♗g7 5 ♗d3 ♘f6 6 0-0 ♗f5! 7 c4 e6 8 ♗e2 ♗xb1 9 ♖xb1 c6 10 b4 a6 11 a4 0-0 12 ♕b3 ♘bd7 13 ♗d2 ♘g4 14 ♖fc1 ♖e8 15 ♗d3 f5 16 b5 with a slight advantage for White, T.Georgadze-Kudrin, Salamanca 1989.

b) 2...♘f6 stops e4, and by continuing this plan with 3 c4 c6 4 ♘f3 g6 5 ♘c3 ♗f5! 6 e3 ♗g7 7 ♗d3 ♗xd3 8 ♕xd3 d5! 9 0-0 0-0 10 b4 ♘bd7 11 c5 b6 12 ♘e5 ♕c7 = Black is OK, Bach-Davies, Gausdal 2000.

c) 2...e5!? is a logical move.

d) 2...c5 (when White is playing the Stonewall, one of the best ways to hit it is the plan of ...d6 with a quick ...e5 or ...c5) 3 e3 g6 4 ♗d3 ♗g7 5 c3 ♘f6 6 ♘f3 0-0 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 ♘bd2 e5! ∓. In Pinto-Galego, Lisbon 1999, Black's strategy soon prevailed: 9 fxe5 dxe5 10 ♘e4 cxd4 11 exd4 ♘xe4 12 ♗xe4 exd4 13 ♗g5 ♕b6 14 ♕c1 dxc3+ 15 ♗e3 cxb2 0-1.

3 ♘d2 e5!?

Secondly he strikes at the white centre.

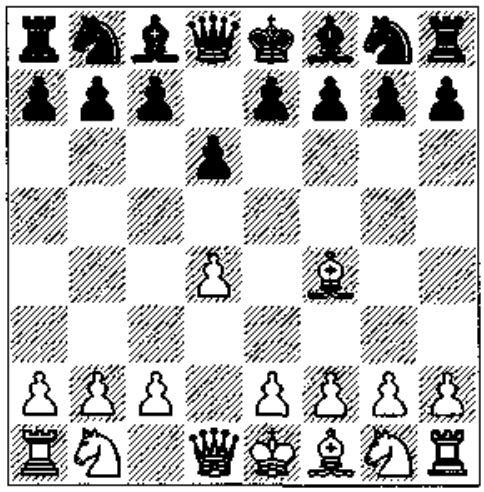
4 fxe5 dxe5 5 ♘df3 e4 6 ♘e5 ♗f5 7 ♗f4 ♗d6 8 ♕d2 f6 9 ♘c4 ♗xf4 10 ♕xf4 ♘e7

∓ Fakkel-De Hoop, Hengelo jr 1999. Black has better central pawns, and his development is OK.

Conclusion: 2 f4 is not a real move, and Black can easily get some advantage. This variation is just to illustrate some standard plans for Black.

B)

2 ♗f4 *(D)*



B

White is going to continue with the set-up ♘f3, e3, h3 and ♗h2.

2...g6

2...c5!? is possible, and scored a quick victory in the following example: 3 c3 cxd4 4 cxd4 ♕b6 5 ♕d2 ♘c6 6 d5 ♘e5 7 e4 ♘f6 8 ♘c3 ♗d7 9 ♗e3 ♕d8 10 f4 ♘eg4 11 ♗d4 e5 12 fxe5? (12 dxe6!) 12...dxe5 13 ♗f2 ♘xf2 14 ♕xf2 ♘g4 15 ♕d2 ♗c5 16 ♘d1 ♕b6 17 a3? ♗xg1 0-1 Crea-Rossi, Bozen 1998.

3 ♘f3 ♗g7 4 e3

It should be mentioned, at least as a curious detail, that in a game Tella-Yrjölä, Tampere rpd 2001, just days before the deadline for this book, White tested this odd variation and the game soon developed an independent character: 4 h3 f5 5 ♘c3 ♘f6 6 e3 0-0 7 ♗d3 ♘c6 8 ♗h2 ♘h5 9 e4 f4 (9...fxe4!?) 10 e5 dxe5 11 dxe5 ♘xe5 12 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 13 ♕e2 ♗g7 (Black could consider 13...♗xc3+!?) 14 0-0-0 and White had excellent compensation.

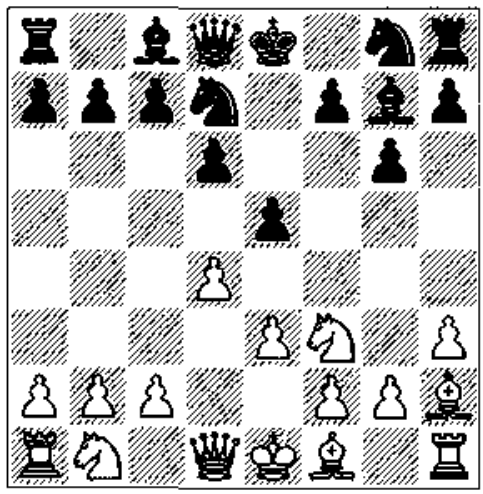
4...♘d7

Planning a quick ...e5, which gives Black a good game.

5 h3

5 c4 e5 6 ♗g3 ♘e7 7 h3 ♘f5 allows Black's pieces to get to very active squares; he might even be better: 8 ♗h2 0-0 (8...exd4!? 9 exd4 ♕f6 suggests itself, attacking the d4-pawn) 9 ♘c3 exd4 10 exd4 ♘h4 11 ♘xh4 ♕xh4 12 ♘b5 ♕e7+ 13 ♗e2 ♘f6 14 0-0 a6 = Alburt-Kavalek, USA Ch (Estes Park) 1986.

5...e5 6 ♗h2 *(D)*



B

6...♕e7

6...e4 7 ♘fd2 f5 is an active option; e.g., 8 c4 ♘gf6 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 b4 ♕e7 11 c5 d5 (11...dxc5!?) 12 ♕b3 c6 13 ♗d6 ♕d8 14 ♗xf8 ♘xf8 15 b5 ♘e6 16 g3 ♘d7 17 ♖c1 ♘df8 18 ♕a4 ♗d7 ± Sapis-Přibyl, Marianske Lazne 1989. Black should, however, be careful about White's dark-squared bishop, as it is placed actively outside the pawn-chain.

7 ♗e2 f5

7...♘gf6 8 c4 0-0 9 ♘c3 b6 10 0-0 ♗b7 is a safe option; for example, 11 b4 ♘e4 12 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 13 ♘d2 ♗b7 14 ♗f3 e4! 15 ♗e2 c5! 16 bxc5 dxc5 17 ♘b3 ♖ad8 18 ♖b1 cxd4 19 exd4 f5 20 ♕d2 g5 gave Black an attack in Ragnarsson-Hickl, Reykjavik 1997.

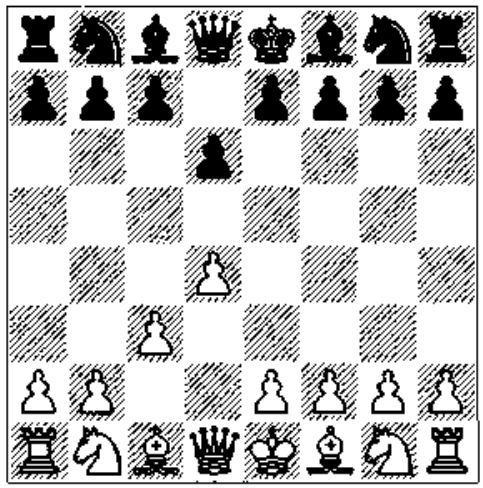
8 0-0 ♘h6 9 c4 0-0 10 ♘c3 c6 11 b4 g5! 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 c5 ♘f7 14 ♕b3 ♔h8 15 ♖ad1 h5 16 ♗c4 g4

Black is already better, Lenz-Szenetra, Baden-Baden 1990.

Conclusion: It is very hard to see the point of 2 ♗f4, as it invites Black to play a quick and effective ...e5 advance, when it is often White who is fighting for equality.

C)

2 c3 *(D)*


B

This move is played quite often, usually transposing to other openings such as the Torre or Pirc. In the Pirc, lines with an early c3 are usually not very sharp, so Black should seriously consider transposing.

2...♘d7

Or:

a) 2...g6 3 ♗g5 (3 e4 ♘f6 4 ♗d3 ♗g7 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 0-0 transposes to Line A of Chapter 25) 3...f5!? (3...♗g7 4 ♘d2 ♘f6 5 ♘gf3 ♘bd7 6 e4 0-0, Bogza-Grigorieva, Bucharest 1999, transposes to a line of the Torre vs KI) 4 e3 (4 e4 fxe4 5 ♘d2 ♘f6 6 f3 exf3 7 ♘gxf3 ♗g7 8 ♗d3 0-0 9 0-0 c6 10 ♕e1 ♘a6 11 ♕h4 ♘c7 12 ♖ae1 ♗f5 13 ♗xf5 gxf5 14 ♖e2 ♕d7 15 ♘e1 ♖ae8 is unclear, Zurek-Jansa, Czech Cht 1993) 4...♘h6 5 ♗c4 c6 6 ♘d2 d5 reaches a sort of Stonewall Dutch position that is OK for Black; e.g., 7 ♗b3 ♘f7 8 ♗h4 ♘d7 9 c4 ♘b6 10 cxd5 ♘xd5 11 ♘gf3 ♗g7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♘c4 ♗e6 14 ♖c1 a5 15 a4 ♖a6 16 ♗g3 ♘b6 17 ♘ce5 ½-½ Hraček-Jansa, Rimavska Sobota 1991.

b) 2...♘f6 3 ♘f3 (3 ♗g5 ♘bd7 4 ♘d2 e5 5 e4 ♗e7 6 ♗d3 gives Black the opportunity to play 6...d5! 7 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 8 exd5 exd4 9 ♕e2+ ♕e7 10 cxd4 ♗xd4 11 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 12 0-0-0 ♗xf2 ∓ Hodgson-McNab, London WFW 1989) 3...♘bd7 4 ♗g5 is best met by 4...e5, when a thematic set-up gave Black a safe position after 5 ♕c2 ♗e7 6 ♘bd2 0-0 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 e4 ♘g4! 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 10 ♗c4 ♘b6 11

♗d3 a5 12 0-0 ♘f6 = in Costa-Hodgson, San Bernardino 1989.

3 ♗f4

3 ♗g5 h6 is OK for Black, but White should play 3 e4!?, with a Pirc-type position.

3...e5 4 ♗g3 ♘gf6 5 e3 ♘e4 6 ♘d2 ♘xg3 7 hxg3

Black has a bishop-pair and a stable position: he has solved his opening problems.

7...g6 8 ♘gf3 ♗g7 9 ♗e2 ♕e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 a4 ♖e8 12 a5 a6 13 ♕c2 e4 14 ♘h2 ♘f6 15 ♖fb1 h5!

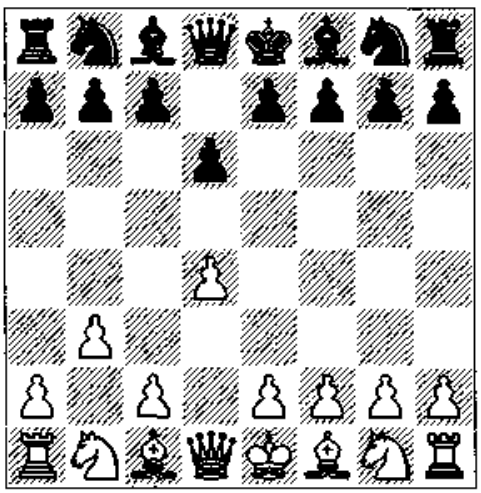
Black has a slight advantage, Pöthig-Bialas, Bundesliga 1981/2.

Conclusion: 2 c3 gives White at best a quiet variation of the Pirc, where he has no real chances of an opening advantage.

D)

2 b3 *(D)*

B



2...e5!

This is in keeping with the spirit of our repertoire.

2...g6 3 ♗b2 ♗g7 leads to quiet positional play, with Black easily obtaining a normal playable position; for example, 4 ♘d2 (4 ♘f3 f5 5 e3 ♘f6 6 ♘bd2 0-0 is a form of Leningrad Dutch, and Black does best to continue in the Dutch spirit: 7 ♗d3 ♘c6 8 0-0 ♔h8 9 a3 e5! 10 dxe5 ♘g4 11 ♘d4 ♘cxe5 12 ♗e2 c5 13 ♘b5 a6 14 ♘c3 ♗e6 15 ♘f3 d5 16 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 17 ♘a4 ♕c7 ∓ Koshy-Conquest, Dhaka 1995) 4...c5 5 e3 b6 6 ♕f3 d5 7 ♗b5+ ♗d7 8 ♗d3 (8 ♕xd5 ♗xb5 9 ♕xa8 ♗c6 10 ♕xa7 ♗xg2 ∓) 8...♘f6 9 dxc5 bxc5 10 ♕e2 (10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 ♕xd5? ♗xa1 12 ♕xa8 ♗c6 −+) 10...0-0 11 ♖d1 ♕c7 with equality, Flohr-Brinckmann, Rogaška Slatina 1929.

3 ♗b2

3 dxe5 dxe5 4 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 5 ♗b2 f6 is equal since White's bishop has no real role on b2.

3...♘c6

3...exd4!? 4 ♗xd4 ♘c6 5 ♗b2 ♘f6 is an active approach for Black that gives him at least an equal position.

4 d5 ♘ce7 5 c4 f5 6 ♘c3 ♘f6 7 ♘f3 c6 8 dxc6 bxc6

Black has more pawns in the centre, and White lacks coordination to get the initiative. Black has no problems.

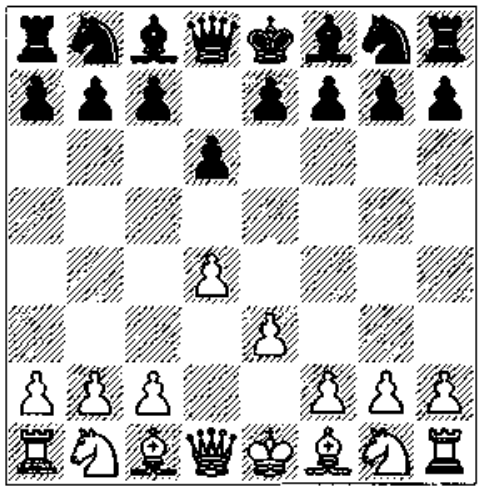
9 e3 ♘g6 10 ♗e2 ♗e7 11 ♕c2 ♕c7 12 0-0 0-0

∓ Mittelstedt-Fernengel, Pocking 1996.

Conclusion: 2 b3 is not a real threat to Black's opening plans.

E)

2 e3 *(D)*



This move is also very flexible, with possible transpositions to many different openings such as the Old Indian or some lines of the Dutch Defence.

2...♘d7

Or:

a) With 2...f5!? Black hopes to reach variations of the Dutch Defence where the move e3 might not be very useful; for example, 3 ♗d3 (3 f4 g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗d3 ♘f6 6 ♘bd2 0-0 7 0-0 ♘bd7 8 c3 h6 9 b3 ♔h7 10 ♕e1 e5 ∓ N.Martinez-Xu Yaping, Istanbul wom OL 2000) 3...e5! 4 c3 ♘f6 5 f3 ♗e6 6 ♘d2 ♗e7 7 e4 fxe4 8 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 9 ♗xe4 d5 10 ♗c2 exd4 11 ♕xd4 ♗f6 12 ♕e3 ♕e7 with equality, Ovezova-Adam, Szeged girls U-14 Wch 1994.

b) 2...e5!? is the standard way to get an ending. After 3 dxe5 dxe5 4 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 the position is equal; for example, 5 ♘f3 (5 ♗c4 f6 6 ♘c3 c6 7 ♗d2 ♔c7 8 0-0-0 ♘d7 9 ♘ge2 ♘e7 10 ♘g3 ♘b6 11 ♗b3 ♗d7 12 ♘ce4 ♘f5 13 ♗a5 ♘xg3 14 ♘xg3 ♗e7 15 ♖d2 ♖hd8 = Simon-Bagirov, Germany 1996/7) 5...f6 6 ♗c4 c6 7 0-0 ♗c5 8 ♖d1+ ♔c7 9 ♘bd2 ♘d7 10 ♘e4 ♗e7 11 ♗d2 ♘h6 12 ♗c3 ♘b6 13 ♗b3 ♗f5 14 ♘g3 ♗g6 ½-½ Lisovik-Borsuk, Alushta 1992.

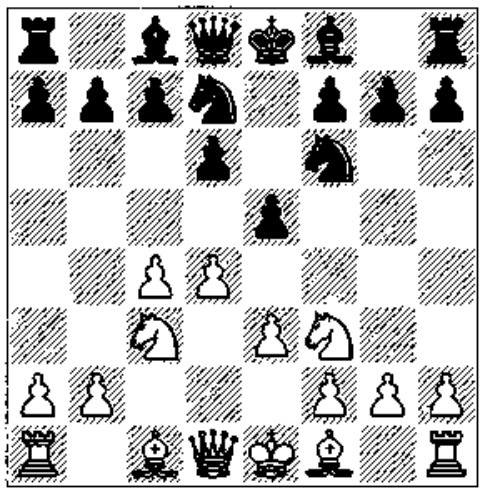
3 c4

3 f4?! e5 is good for Black.

3...e5 4 ♘c3

After 4 ♘f3 g6 Black gets a satisfactory game by continuing in King's Indian fashion with ...♗g7, ...♘gf6 and ...0-0.

4...♘gf6 5 ♘f3 *(D)*



5...♗e7

5...c6 6 ♗e2 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 transposes to a harmless variation of the Old Indian, with which Julian Hodgson has scored well. For example, 8 ♖b1 ♖e8 (8...e4 9 ♘d2 d5 10 b4 ♖e8 11 b5 c5!? 12 cxd5 cxd4 13 exd4 ♗d6 14 ♘c4 ♘b6 15 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 16 ♕b3 ♘fxd5 17 ♗a3 ♕d8 18 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 19 ♗c4 ♗e6 is unclear, Kallai-Hodgson, French Cht 1999) 9 b4 ♗f8 10 b5 e4 11 bxc6 bxc6 12 ♘d2 ♖b8 13 ♕c2 d5 14 ♕a4 ♖xb1 15 ♘cxb1 ♕c7 16 ♗a3 ♘b6 17 ♕a5 ♗g4 18 ♘c3 ♗xa3 19 ♕xa3 ♗xe2 20 ♘xe2 ♘g4 21 ♘g3

h5 with the initiative for Black, Vera-Hodgson, Lucerne Wcht 1989.

6 ♗d3 0-0 7 0-0 ♖e8 8 ♕c2 ♗f8

8...h6 also leads to a quiet position: 9 h3 b6 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♖d1 ♗b7 12 ♗f5 ♗xf3 13 gxf3 ♗d6 14 ♘e4 ♕e7 15 ♘xd6 cxd6 16 b3 ♘c5 favours Black, Kolarov-Pirc, Gyula 1965.

9 b3 g6

This position is similar to an Old Indian. Now 10 ♗a3? is a bad tactical mistake due to 10...e4! 11 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 12 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 (12...d5!) 13 ♕xe4 d5 14 ♕xd5 c6 15 ♕g5 ♕xg5 16 ♘xg5 ♗xa3, when Black has an advantage, Michenka-Vokač, Ceske Budejovice 1996.

Conclusion: After 2 e3 there are many transpositional possibilities, although the quiet Old Indian-type positions are playable for Black.

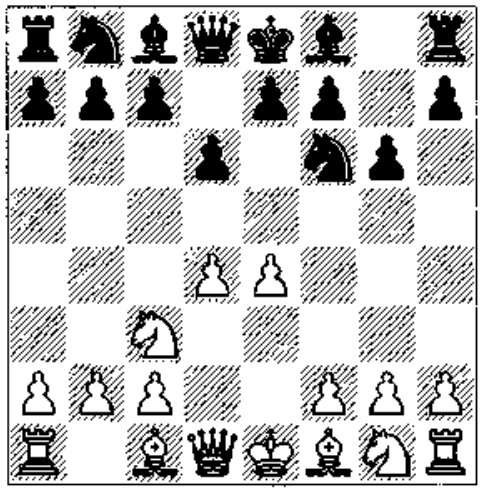
20 The Pirc Defence: Introduction

When planning this book, one major discussion dealt with the repertoire choice against 1 d4 d6 2 e4 and 1 e4. We had three options: the normal Pirc (2...♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6), the Czech system (2...♘f6 3 ♘c3 c6) or the Modern (2...g6). The main line of the Czech (4 f4) seemed to us too dubious for Black although some of the sublines (especially 4 ♘f3 ♗g4) fit together with the repertoire very well. The Modern move-order 2...g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 gives Black additional weapons in some Pirc variations, especially against 4 ♗e3 and 4 ♗g5. However, Black has to take into consideration some additional options for White, especially 3 c4, which leads to either a King's Indian or to some Modern line. There is an important psychological point not to allow a 1 d4 player to return to a 1 d4 opening after he has 'gambled' with 2 e4. However, there certainly do exist plenty of 1 d4 players who are quite confident in playing the Pirc with White. Eventually, partly because of Nunn's recommendation, the more forcing Pirc was chosen. Only later did we recall that there is a fourth option, namely the endgame/Philidor variation with 2...♘f6 3 ♘c3 e5 briefly discussed in Line B of Chapter 33, which fits well with our repertoire as a simple alternative to the Pirc. There may be players who feel uneasy with some complicated Pirc lines and players who find the Pirc too theoretical.

The Pirc Defence is a theoretically respected and positionally well-founded system with a lot of material to study. Our coverage here is therefore highly selective, since our primary aim has been just to provide Black with a viable repertoire. We have chosen only solid lines with tolerable practical results for Black. For those who require more detail, we can recommend the fairly recent book *The Ultimate Pirc* by Nunn and McNab. However, we do have plenty of new material compared with that book: new examples, original suggestions and even some variations that are not discussed there.

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6 *(D)*

Unfortunately, the Pirc is not always a perfect choice from the psychological point of view. In the diagram position (and a move earlier) White has a wide choice of variations and systems leading to quite a variety of position-types. White has a few choices with good chances to make a draw at will. There are also excellent chances for



White, with 4 ♗g5 for instance, to make the game terribly difficult from either the positional or the tactical point of view.

In the Pirc there are historically two main lines: the Austrian Attack (4 f4) and the Classical Pirc, which features natural development by 4 ♘f3 and 5 ♗e2. Although positionally very different, these are quite concrete lines with not so many chances for White to lead a well-prepared opponent into unknown territory right from the start. This is why the popularity of the lines 4 ♗e3 and 4 ♗g5 is gradually increasing. Especially the former is a flexible move, retaining options of many different plans. The latter is probably more appealing than 4 f4 for an attacking player who wants to play for a win. 4 g3 followed by ♗g2 and ♘ge2 is a positional system, but it seems White has trouble getting anything if Black has done his homework well. The importance of the other 4th move alternatives is more marginal though the flank attack idea with 4 ♗e2 and h4 seems to be quite popular beneath the top levels. Also, 4 ♗c4 has a somewhat dubious reputation because the active c4-bishop tends to become exposed or blocked.

The third-move alternatives to 3 ♘c3, namely 3 ♗d3 and 3 f3, should also be taken seriously. The latter is a useful weapon for a universal player who knows something about everything. Black has several options – but all of them can lead to position-types

Variation	Games	W's score	W's rating	W's Performance
3 ♗d3	1242	56%	2335	2380
3 f3	921	55%	2313	2356
4 f4	4144	58%	2324	2384
4 ♘f3	3697	55%	2355	2394
4 ♗e3	1604	60%	2363	2419
4 ♗g5	1510	58%	2334	2380
4 g3	1101	57%	2365	2410
4 ♗e2	973	54%	2288	2335

from other openings. Against 3 ♗d3 Black is likely to get a comfortable positional fight with standard moves.

The table at the bottom of the preceding page gives statistics for White's main lines.

The statistics provide some useful information but there is also some uncertainty because of the many transpositions between lines. It seems that 4 ♗e3 is the most effective of the main choices but the high performance is mainly caused by the fact that the natural response, 4...♗g7, is not doing well. With our recommendation 4...c6 Black has performed more acceptably. Besides, the badly performing 4 f3 normally transposes to ♗e3 lines. We also see the practical value of 3 f3. Maybe Black is not always well prepared for such a move or maybe it is a good ploy to force a Pirc specialist to play something else. It must be noted that if we take statistics from the last five years, the performances don't change much but 4 ♗e3 and 4 ♗g5 are close in popularity to 4 f4 and 4 ♘f3. It is therefore logical to pay most attention to these four moves.

Most of the lines introduced here are also applicable with the Modern move-order. The Pirc/Modern is quite a popular opening in the hands of players who want to play for a win and who like pawn-chain strategies and manoeuvring. Some top players use the Pirc occasionally. There are also some players just below the world's absolute elite who specialize (or have specialized) in the Pirc/Modern, such as Chernin, M.Gurevich, Azmaiparashvili and of course Nunn.

21 The Austrian Attack with 5...c5

Our choice against the Austrian Attack is 5...c5 (rather than 5...0-0). The theoretical and practical value of these two lines is about the same but the variation tree of 5...c5 is narrower and easier to control. For someone who really hates draws we can recommend 5...0-0 (not covered here) because there is a forced draw after 5...c5 (see the note to White's 10th move in Line A) and some other lines lead to a drawish position. Black has a desperate attempt in Line A at move 8 to play for a win but strong nerves are needed. In Line B we have better chances for a fight, but this is White's choice.

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6 4 f4 ♗g7 5 ♘f3

5 e5 ♘fd7! 6 ♘f3 c5 transposes to note 'b' to White's 6th move.

5...c5 *(D)*

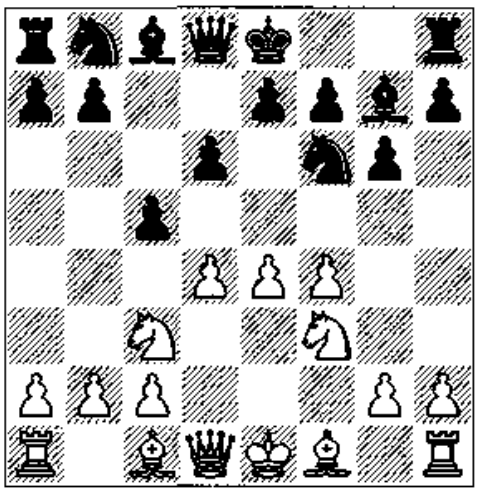
This is our recommendation. The main alternative is 5...0-0, which demands even more hours with the theory books.

Now (after 5...c5):

A: 6 ♗b5+ 169
B: 6 dxc5 172

The alternatives don't promise White much:

W



a) The Benoni-type system 6 d5 0-0 7 ♗d3 (7 ♗.c4?! allows the typical trick 7...b5! 8 ♗xb5 ♘xe4 9 ♘xe4 ♕a5+ 10 ♘c3 ♗xc3+ 11 bxc3 ♕xb5, which is fine for Black) 7...e6 8 0-0 (8 dxe6 fxe6 9 0-0 ♘c6 is OK for Black) 8...exd5 9 exd5 ♘a6 = doesn't offer White much because of the trick 10 f5 c4! 11 ♗xc4 ♗xf5.

b) 6 e5 ♘fd7! 7 exd6 (with 7 e6 fxe6 8 ♘g5 ♘f6 9 dxc5 0-0 10 ♗c4 d5 White has destroyed his own centre but 7 dxc5 dxe5 8 fxe5 ♘xe5 9 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10 ♘xe5 ♗.xe5 11 ♗c4 ♗e6!? 12 ♗xe6 ♗xc3+ 13 bxc3 fxe6 leads to an interesting unclear ending, Velimirović-Vujadinović, Niš 1994) 7...0-0 8 ♗e3 (8 dxe7 ♕xe7+ 9 ♕e2 ♕d8 is risky for White) 8...exd6 9 ♕d2 ♘c6

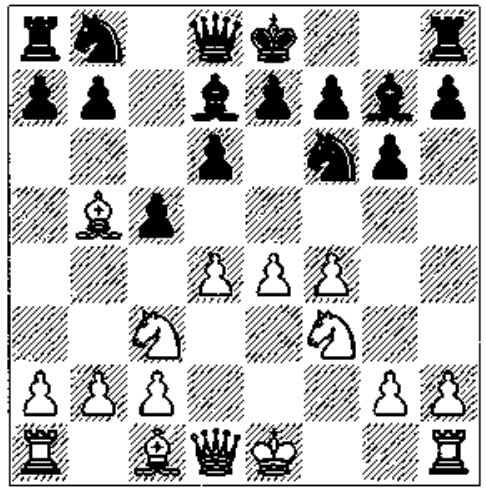
10 0-0-0 ♕a5 11 ♔b1 ♘f6 gives Black at least equality. 12 h3 and now:

b1) 12...♗e6!? 13 a3 (13 d5 ♘b4 14 ♗c4 ♗f5 ∓) 13...♖fe8 looks interesting, because 14 d5? ♘xd5 doesn't work.

b2) 12...♖b8 13 dxc5 dxc5 14 ♘d5 ♘xd5 15 ♕xa5 ♘xa5 16 ♖xd5 b6 17 ♘e5 ½-½ V.Fedorov-Manion, Philadelphia 1992.

A)

6 ♗b5+ ♗d7 *(D)*



7 e5

Here the alternative for White is another Benoni-style continuation, 7 ♗xd7+ ♘fxd7 8 d5, but Black immediately achieves the ideal Benoni move 8...b5!. Then:

a) White cannot hope much with 9 ♘xb5 ♕a5+ 10 ♘c3 ♗xc3+ 11 bxc3 ♕xc3+ 12 ♗d2 ♕c4 13 ♕e2 ♘b6 14 a4 a5 15 ♕xc4 ♘xc4 16 ♗c3 0-0 17 ♔e2 ♘d7 18 ♘d2 ♘cb6 19 g4 e6 = Rõtšagov-Agrest, Stockholm 1997.

b) 9 0-0 b4 10 ♘e2 ♘b6 11 f5!? (11 ♘g3 ♘8d7 12 ♕e2 ♕c7 is equal) 11...♘8d7 12 ♘f4 ♗f6! (stopping ♘g5) 13 ♕e2 ♕c7 14 a3 a5 = D.Popescu-G.Popescu, Bucharest 1993.

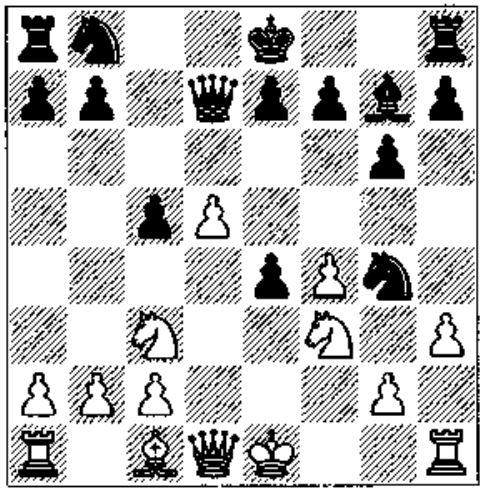
c) 9 ♕e2 b4 10 ♘d1 ♘b6 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♘f2 (12 c4!?) 12...♕c8 13 ♖e1?! (13 f5 ♕a6 14 ♕e1 offers White better counterplay according to Shirov) 13...a5 14 ♖b1 e6?! (14...♘8d7 is good for Black) 15 c4 bxc3 16 bxc3 ± Shirov-Beliavsky, Madrid 1997.

White has scored very well in practice with 7 ♗xd7+ but theoretically it doesn't look dangerous.

7...♘g4 8 e6

White has two important alternatives:

a) 8 ♗xd7+ (solid but rather drawish) 8...♕xd7 9 d5 dxe5 10 h3 e4 *(D)* and then:



a1) 11 hxg4!? (relatively unpopular) 11...exf3 12 ♕xf3 ♘a6 13 ♗d2 ♘b4!? 14 0-0-0 0-0-0 15 ♘e4 and now Black should play 15...♕b5 (not 15...♘xa2+? 16 ♔b1 ♕b5 17 ♕a3 ♘b4 18 ♘xc5 ±) according to Nunn. After 16 ♕b3, 16...♖xd5 seems to be tactically justified.

a2) 11 ♘xe4 ♘f6 is the main line:

a21) 12 ♘e5 ♕a4 (12...♕c7) 13 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 14 0-0 ♘d7 =.

a22) 12 ♘xc5 ♕xd5 13 ♕xd5 ♘xd5 14 ♘xb7 ♘c6 gives Black nice compensation; for example, 15 0-0 ♖b8 16 ♘c5 ♗xb2 ∓.

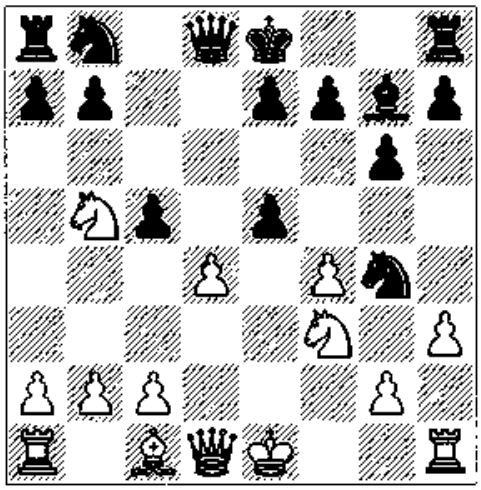
a23) 12 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13 0-0 0-0 and then:

a231) 14 c4 e6 (or 14...♕d6 15 f5 ♘d7 16 ♗h6 ♖fd8 17 fxg6 hxg6 18 ♕e2 b5 =) 15 ♘e5 ♕d6 16 ♕b3 b6 17 ♘g4 ♗g7 18 ♕f3 (18 ♗e3 =) 18...f5 19 ♘e5 ♘d7 20 ♘c6 ♖fe8 21 ♖d1 ♘f6 ∓ Cuijpers-Van der Sterren, Dutch Ch (Hilversum) 1983.

a232) After 14 ♘e5 ♕d6 15 c4! (15 ♗e3 ♘d7) 15...♘d7 16 ♘g4 ♗d4+ 17 ♗e3 ♗xe3+ 18 ♘xe3, Dvoretsky gives 18...f5! = as a solid equalizer.

a233) 14 ♗e3 ♗xb2 (less reliable looks 14...♘a6 15 ♘e5 ♕d6 16 ♘g4 ♗xb2 17 ♖b1 ♗g7 18 f5 with good attacking chances for White, Yusupov-Hort, Bundesliga 1993/4) 15 ♖b1 ♗g7 16 ♗xc5 ♖d8 17 c4 (after 17 ♘e5 ♕c7 18 ♗a3 Black has the nice move 18...♘c6!; for example, 19 ♕f3 ♘d4 20 ♕e4 ♘f5 21 ♖b3 ♖ac8 ∓ Liss-Chernin, Rishon le Zion 1994; 17 ♖e1 ♕xd5 18 ♗xe7 ♕xd1 =) 17...♕c7 18 ♗d4 ♕xc4 19 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 20 ♖xb7 ♕xd5 21 ♕xd5 ♖xd5 22 ♖xe7 (22 ♖c1 ♘d7 23 ♖cc7 ♘c5 24 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 25 ♖xa7 ♘d3 = Gara-Zimmerman, Budapest 1994) 22...♘c6 23 ♖c7 ♘d8 with equality, Acs-Chernin, Hungarian Ch 1999.

b) 8 h3 ♗xb5 (8...cxd4 9 ♕xd4 ♘h6 10 g4 ♗xb5 11 ♘xb5 0-0 is also very complicated) 9 ♘xb5 (9 hxg4 dxe5 10 ♘xb5 transposes to line 'b2') 9...dxe5 *(D)* is highly unclear:



b1) 10 ♕e2 is unconvincing: 10...e4 11 ♘e5 (11 hxg4 exf3 12 ♕xf3 ♕d7 ∓) 11...♘f6 12 ♕c4 0-0 13 dxc5?! (13 ♕xc5 may be better, although Black's position looks active) 13...♘c6! 14 ♘xc6 bxc6 15 ♘c3 e5! 16 fxe5 ♘h5 17 0-0 ♗xe5 with a slight advantage for Black, Bednar-Zimmerman, Komarno 1997.

b2) 10 hxg4 ♕a5+ is the main line. White has three options, two of which look slightly suspect:

b21) 11 ♗d2 ♕xb5 12 dxe5 ♕xb2 13 ♖b1 ♕xa2 14 ♖xb7 ♕d5! (Black is a little better due to his strong centralized queen) 15 ♕b1 0-0 (15...♘c6!? 16 ♖c7?! 0-0 ∓ Antal-Zimmerman, Budapest 1996) 16 ♕b3 c4 (why not 16...♕xb3 17 cxb3 ♘c6 ∓?) 17 ♕b5 ♕e4+ 18 ♔f2 c3!? 19 ♗xc3 ♕xf4 20 ♖xe7 with a complex position, Grosar-Chernin, Austrian Cht 1995/6.

b22) 11 ♔f2 e4 12 ♕e1 (12 ♘g5?! ♕xb5 13 dxc5 ♘a6 14 ♘xe4 ♘xc5 ∓) 12...♕xb5 13 ♕xe4 ♘d7 14 ♖e1 0-0 is

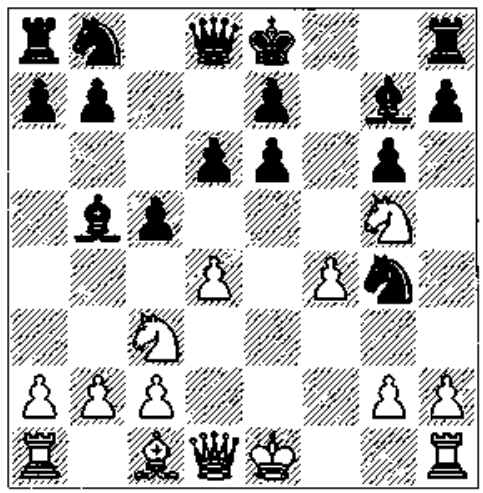
unclear though Black apparently has a safer king, Sathe-Hennigan, British Ch (Swansea) 1987.

b23) 11 c3 is probably the strongest: 11...e4 12 ♕e2 exf3 13 ♘d6+ (13 gxf3 cxd4 14 ♘d6+ ♔f8 ∓ Belikov-Kubanov, St Petersburg 1993) 13...♔d7 14 ♘xb7 ♕b6 15 ♕xf3 cxd4 is very hard to evaluate. V.Fedorov-Ma.Tseitlin, USSR 1977 continued 16 ♕d5+ ♔c7 (16...♔c8) 17 ♕xf7 ♕xb7 18 ♕xg7 ♕xg2 19 ♕e5+ ♔b7 20 ♖f1 (20 ♕xe7+) 20...♘c6 21 ♕b5+ ♔c7 and Black could be quite happy.

8...fxe6

If Black really has to play for a win, there is the line 8...♗xb5 9 exf7+ ♔d7 10 ♘xb5 ♕a5+ 11 ♘c3 h5 (or 11...cxd4 12 ♘xd4 h5) 12 h3 cxd4 13 ♘xd4 ♘c6 14 ♘de2 (14 ♘f3!? ♘h6 15 0-0 ♗xc3 16 bxc3 is unclear) 14...♘h6 15 ♗e3 ♖af8!? 16 ♕d3 ♘f5 17 ♗f2 ♖xf7 18 0-0-0!? (18 0-0) 18...h4, Oll-Gurevich, Tallinn 1987, but of course Black has to be very careful in such a high-risk position. This line has been rather unpopular in recent years.

9 ♘g5 ♗xb5 *(D)*



W

10 ♘xb5

In the line 10 ♘xe6 ♗xd4 11 ♘xb5 (11 ♘xd8 ♗f2+ 12 ♔d2 ♗e3+ is a well-known forced draw) 11...♕a5+ 12 ♕d2 (12 c3 ♗f2+ 13 ♔d2 ♗e3+ 14 ♔c2 ♕a4+ 15 ♔b1 ♕e4+ 16 ♕c2 ♕xc2+ 17 ♔xc2 ♔d7 18 ♘ec7 a6 19 ♘xa8 axb5 20 a4 bxa4 21 ♖xa4 ♔c6 is much better for Black, Lanc-Pähtz, Dresden 1988) 12...♗f2+ 13 ♔d1 ♘e3+ 14 ♔e2 ♕xb5+ 15 ♔xf2 ♘g4+ 16 ♔g3 ♔d7 17 ♕d5 (Dlugy gives 17 ♖e1 ♘h6 18 h3 ♘c6 19 ♔h2 ♘f5 20 c3 ♘d8 ∓ defending successfully) 17...♘f6 18 ♘xc5+ ♔e8 19 ♕xb7 ♕xb7 20 ♘xb7 a5 ∓ the knight gets into trouble.

10...♕a5+ 11 c3 ♕xb5 12 ♘xe6

12 ♕xg4 cxd4 13 ♘xe6 ♕c4 transposes to the main line.

12...♕c4

The more natural move 12...♘a6!? is a little risky in view of 13 ♘xg7+ ♔f7 14 ♘e6 (14 ♕xg4 ♔xg7 15 ♗e3!? ♕xb2 16 0-0 ♕xc3 17 ♖ael ♖hf8 18 ♕h4! also gives White an initiative for the sacrificed material) 14...♔xe6 15 ♕xg4+ ♔f7 16 ♗e3 ♕xb2 17 0-0 ♕xc3 18 ♖ael with a strong initiative for White (Nunn and McNab).

13 ♕xg4 cxd4 *(D)*

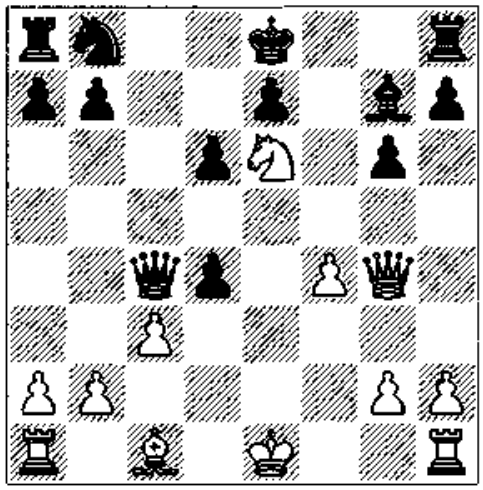
14 ♘xg7+

14 f5 ♗f6 15 fxg6 ♖g8 16 g7 ♘c6! 17 ♘c7+ ♔d8 18 ♘e6+ (the alternative 18 ♘xa8 ♖xg7 19 ♕e4 ♘e5 is too risky for White) 18...♔e8 = Shirov-Khalifman, Groningen 1990, is another practically forced draw.

14...♔f7 15 f5

The ending after 15 ♘f5 ♕e6+ 16 ♘e3 dxe3 17 ♕xe6+ ♔xe6 18 ♗xe3 is

W



quite pleasant for Black, who has an active king.

15...♔xg7 16 ♕h4 ♘c6

Now:

a) 17 ♖f1?! ♖hf8! 18 ♗h6+ ♔h8 19 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 20 0-0-0 gxf5 21 ♔b1 b5 gives Black good compensation for the exchange, Beliavsky-Hodgson, Belgrade 1993.

b) Hodgson's suggestion 17 ♗h6+ is untested. Then:

b1) 17...♔g8?! 18 ♕e4! (18 ♖f1 b5 19 0-0-0 dxc3 20 f6! is interesting) is good for White given that the natural 18...gxf5?! 19 ♕xf5 dxc3 loses to 20 ♖f1! ♕h4+ 21 ♖f2 ♕f6 22 ♕d5+ e6 23 ♖xf6 exd5 24 0-0-0.

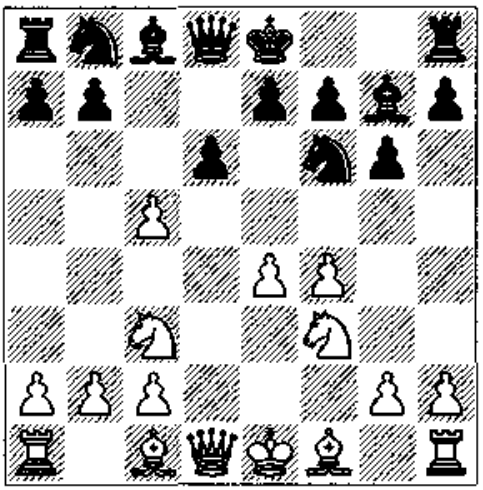
b2) 17...♔f7!? 18 ♖f1 ♔e8 19 f6 ♕e6+ 20 ♔d1 dxc3 21 f7+ ♔d7 is a suggestion by Nunn and McNab, which gives Black compensation in the form of his safer king.

Conclusion: All the lines are probably OK for Black but there is a lot of theory to study here. For some players it might be a problem that White can take a draw in this line if he wants.

B)

6 dxc5 *(D)*

B



This is the more positional choice, if anything can be described as positional in the Austrian Attack.

6...♕a5 7 ♗d3

Or:

a) The endgame after 7 ♕d3 ♕xc5 8 ♗e3 ♕a5 9 ♕b5+ ♕xb5 10 ♘xb5 (10 ♗xb5+ ♘c6 =) 10...♘a6 11 ♗d3 0-0 is not dangerous because 12 ♗xa7 ♘h5 13 ♗e3 ♗xb2 14 ♖b1 ♗g7 offers Black at least equality, A.Sokolov-M.Gurevich, USSR Ch (Riga) 1985.

b) Equally tame is 7 ♗b5+ ♗d7 8 ♗xd7+ ♘bxd7 9 0-0 ♕xc5+ 10 ♔h1 0-0, with an easy life for Black.

7...♕xc5 8 ♕e2 ♗g4 9 ♗e3 ♕a5 10 0-0 ♘c6 11 h3

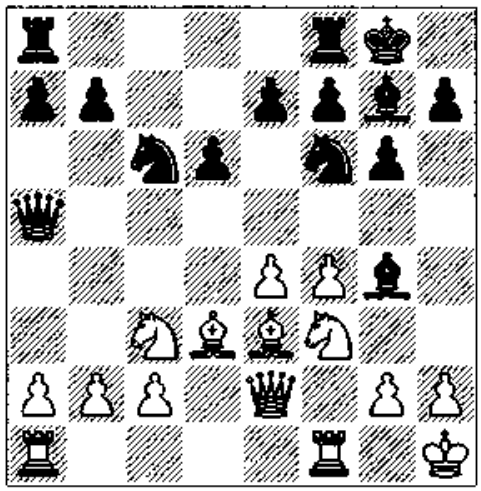
White has some alternative ideas instead of this obvious-looking move:

a) The committal 11 a3 0-0 12 b4?! (12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♕xf3 transposes to the main line; in Kuznetsova-M.Gurevich, Cappelle la Grande 2001 Black generated counterplay in an instructive way: 12 ♖ab1 ♘d7 13 b4 ♕d8 14

♕d2 ♗xf3 15 ♖xf3 a5! 16 b5 ♘d4 17 ♖ff1 ♖c8 18 ♘e2 ♘xe2+ 19 ♕xe2 ♖c3 20 ♖b3 ♕c8 ∓) looks like a suspicious way to create weaknesses in White's own camp: 12...♕d8 13 ♖ad1 ♘d7 14 ♕d2 ♖c8.

b) 11 ♔h1 0-0 *(D)* and then:

W



b1) 12 a3 ♘d7 13 ♕e1 ♘c5 14 f5?! (sounder is 14 h3 ♘xd3 15 cxd3 ♗d7 =) 14...♘xd3 15 cxd3 gxf5 16 ♕g3?! (16 ♕h4!? f4! 17 ♗xf4 ♕h5 ∓ Kasimdzhanov) 16...fxe4 17 dxe4 (17 ♕xg4 f5) 17...♗h5? (Kasimdzhanov gives 17...♕h5! 18 ♘d5 ♗d7 19 h3 ♕g6 20 ♕h4 f5! ∓) 18 b4 ♕d8 19 b5 ♗g6 20 bxc6 ♗xc3 21 cxb7 ♖b8 with complicated play, Kotsur-Kasimdzhanov, Istanbul OL 2000.

b2) 12 ♕e1 ♖ac8 (12...♘b4!? 13 h3 ♘xd3 14 cxd3 ♗d7 certainly looks playable) and now:

b21) There is little point in 13 a3 ♖fd8 14 h3 (14 ♘d2!?) 14...♗xf3 15 ♖xf3 e6! 16 ♕g1 ♘e8 17 ♘d1?! (according to Ribli 17 ♖af1 ♗xc3 18 bxc3 ♕xc3 19 f5, with compensation, is more critical) 17...d5! 18 e5 f5 19 exf6 ♘xf6 ∓ Glek-Ribli, Bundesliga 1996/7.

b22) 13 ♘d2 intending to trap the bishop with f5 seems to force a retreat:

b221) 13...♗e6!? 14 f5 ♗d7 15 ♘c4 ♕d8 16 ♕h4?! (Mortensen's suggestion 16 a4 stops the most obvious counterplay) 16...b5! 17 ♘xb5 ♘b4 18 ♘xa7 ♖xc4 19 ♗xc4 ♘xc2 with a messy position, Mortensen-Cu.Hansen, Espoo Z 1989.

b222) 13...♗d7 14 ♘b3 ♕d8 15 a4! (15 ♕h4 ♘g4 16 ♗g1 f5 17 ♖ae1 e6 = Agnos-McNab, London Lloyds Bank 1990) 15...♗e6 (or 15...♘b4 16 ♗xa7) 16 ♘d4 ♘xd4 17 ♗xd4 a6 18 f5 ♗c4 19 a5 ♘d7 20 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 (Mortensen-Sokolovs, Copenhagen 1997) and according to Mortensen White should play 21 ♖a4! ♗xd3 22 cxd3 ♘c5 23 ♖d4 ♘b3 24 ♖b4 ♘xa5 25 ♘d5 with attacking chances, but this all looks rather complicated and unclear.

c) A very similar idea is 11 ♕e1 0-0 12 ♘d2 (12 ♔h1 transposes to line 'b2'), and now:

c1) 12...♘b4!? 13 ♘b3 ♕d8 (Black could consider 13...♕h5!?) 14 f5 is risky because the bishop is in trouble.

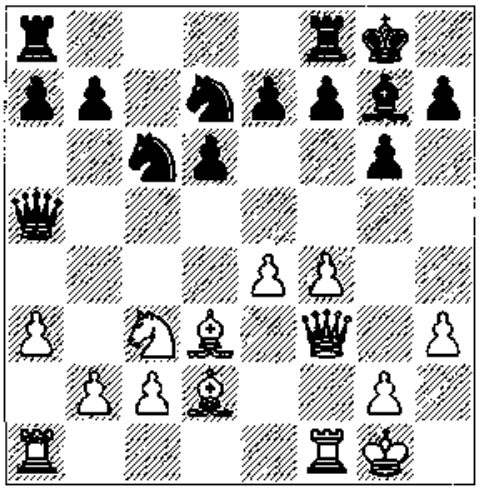
c2) 12...♗d7 13 ♘b3 ♕d8 and now:

c21) 14 ♔h1!? ♘g4?! (14...♘b4 should be OK) 15 ♗g1 f5 16 exf5 gxf5 17 ♗c4+ ♔h8 18 ♖d1 ± M.Andersson-Burwick, Stockholm 1998.

c22) 14 h3 ♘b4 15 ♕f2 b5! 16 a3 ♘xd3 17 cxd3 ♕b8! 18 d4 b4 19 axb4 ♕xb4 20 ♘c1 ♗c6 was fine for Black in Mortensen-Yrjölä, Espoo Z 1989.

11...♗xf3 12 ♕xf3 0-0 13 a3 ♘d7 14 ♗d2 *(D)*

B



14...♕d8

This is the current trend, and is favoured especially by Chernin. The plan is to continue with solid moves like ...e6, ...♖c8, ...a6 and ...b5, and to wait for White to commit himself with some active move like f5. However, there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with the old line 14...♕b6+ 15 ♔h1 ♘c5 16 ♖ab1 ♘xd3 17 cxd3 f5! 18 g4 e6. After, for example, 19 gxf5!? exf5 20 ♘d5 ♕d8 21 ♗c3 ♘e7 22 e5!? dxe5 23 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 24 ♗b4 ♕f7 25 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 26 fxe5 ♗xe5 Black has sufficient compensation, Glek-Chernin, Neu Isenburg 1991.

15 ♔h1

15 ♖ae1 e6 16 ♔h1 ♖c8 17 f5 a6 18 ♕g3 ♗e5 19 ♗f4 ♘f6 20 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 21 ♘e2 ♘h5 22 ♕e3 ♕h4 23 ♔g1 ♖fe8 = Fierz-M.Gurevich, Cappelle la Grande 2001.

15...e6

Now:

a) 16 ♕g3 a6 17 f5 ♗e5 18 ♗f4 ♘f6! 19 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 (the position is very similar to the note to White's 15th move; Black has at least equalized thanks to his dominant knight) 20 ♕h4 ♔g7 21 ♘e2 h6! 22 ♘d4 exf5 23 exf5 g5 ∓ Van der Poel-Chernin, San Bernardino 1994.

b) After the slightly illogical move 16 ♗c4, Black has many attractive options: 16...♘d4!? (the two alternatives 16...a6 17 ♗a2 ♕c7 18 ♖ad1 b5 19 ♗e1 ♘b6 20 ♕d3 ♖ad8 = Arnason-J.Kristiansen, Gausdal Z 1987 and 16...♖c8 look solid enough) 17 ♕d1 (17 ♕f2!? ♘xc2 18 ♖ac1 ♘d4 19 ♗e3 ♘c6 20 ♖fd1 gives White compensation) 17...d5! 18 exd5 ♘b6 19 ♗a2?! (19 ♗d3 ♘xd5 =) 19...exd5 20 ♘e2 ♘f5 ∓ Campora-Chernin, San Bernardino 1991.

c) 16 f5 most likely offers Black the e5-square prematurely.

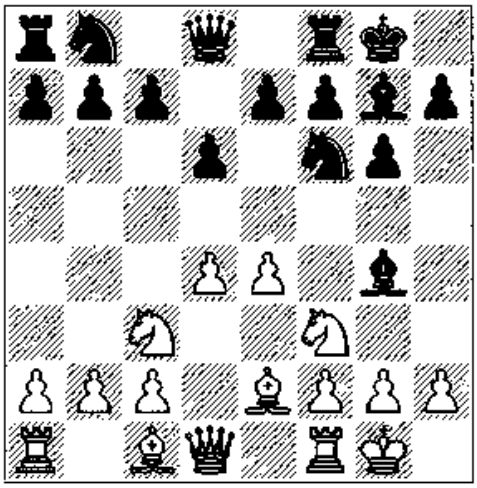
d) 16 g4 is more logical but untested. Maybe White has time to do something useful before playing f5.

Conclusion: Here White has better chances for fighting for an advantage than in Line A but in practice Black has done OK and theoretically there are no lines that are terribly frightening.

22 The Classical Pirc with 6...♗g4

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 0-0 ♗g4 *(D)*

W



We have chosen to recommend this reliable move instead of 6...c6, which is more unclear in nature. We believe that the line 6...♘c6 7 d5 ♘b8 is not to everyone's taste, and the same comment applies to the Schmid Benoni, which arises after 6...c5 7 d5.

Now:

A: 7 ♗e3	176
B: 7 h3	182

The former is the most popular move, but it seems at the moment that White is struggling to find anything promising at all. An important new discovery is the solidity of the move 8...♘b8 in Line A2. In Line B, White has better chances to create some opening problems for Black.

White has several other possibilities:

a) 7 ♗g5 is not very popular. The play after 7...♘c6 resembles Line A:

a1) 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♗xf3 h6 10 ♗e3 e5 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♘e2 ♘h7 (12...♕e7 13 c3 ♖fd8!? 14 ♕a4 ♘d7 15 ♖ad1 ♘b6 16 ♕c2 ♔h7 17 b3 ♗f6 18 ♗c1 ♗g5 19 ♗b2 was very close to equality in Vuković-Bogdanovsky, Nikšić 1992) 13 g3 ♘g5 14 ♗g2 ♘e6 15 c3 a5 16 ♕xd8 ♖fxd8 17 ♖ad1 ♗f8 = Abramović-Todorčević, Yugoslav Ch 1993.

a2) The other option is 8 ♕d2 e5 (8...♘d7 9 ♘d5 ♘f6 is also playable):

a21) 9 dxe5 dxe5 and then:

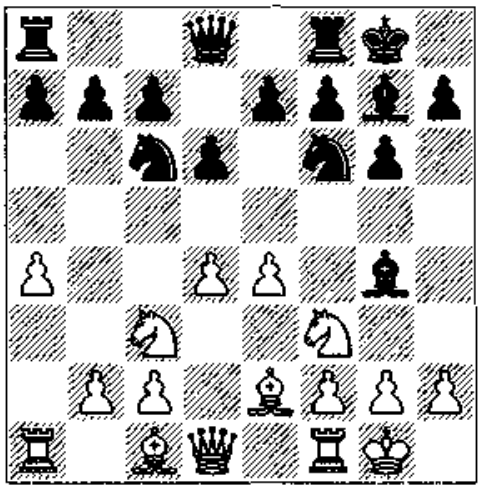
a211) 10 ♖ad1 ♗xf3 11 ♗xf3 ♘d4 12 ♕e3 ½-½ Kavalek-Benko, USA Ch (Oberlin) 1975.

a212) 10 ♕xd8 ♖axd8 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♘d5 ♗g7 13 ♘xc7 ♗xf3 14 ♗xf3 ♖d2 15 ♖ac1 ♘d4 16 ♖fd1?! (16 ♘d5) 16...♖xd1+ 17 ♗xd1 ♗h6 18 ♖b1 ♘xc2 ∓ gave Black active play in Salai-Novak, Slovakian Ch (Bardejov) 1981.

a22) 9 d5 ♘e7 10 ♖ad1 ♔h8!? 11 ♘e1 ♗d7 12 ♗h6 ♘eg8 13 ♗xg7+

♔xg7 14 ♘d3 ♕e7 15 f4 exf4 16 ♖xf4 ♗e8 17 ♖df1 ♘d7 = gives Black a solid position and control of e5, Comas Fabrego-Magem, Spanish Cht (Linares) 1991.

b) Another rather rarely played possibility, 7 a4 ♘c6 *(D)*, is more obscure:



b1) After 8 d5 Black can use the offered b4-square: 8...♘b4! 9 a5, and now:

b11) 9...c6 10 a6 (10 ♖a4!? ♘a6 11 dxc6 ♘c5 12 cxb7 ♖b8 13 a6 may be dangerous for Black) 10...bxa6 11 dxc6 ♘xc6 12 ♖xa6 ♘b4 13 ♖a4 a5 14 ♘d4 ♗d7 15 ♖a3 ♕b8 = Beliavsky-Speelman, Linares 1992.

b12) 9...♗d7!, not allowing ♖a4, is better according to Speelman. Morović-Chernin, Buenos Aires 1992 continued 10 a6 bxa6 11 ♗xa6 ♘xa6 12 ♖xa6 c6!? 13 ♗e3 ♕c8 14 ♕a1 ♕b7 15 ♕a2 ♘xe4 (15...♖fb8!) 16 ♘xe4 cxd5 17 ♘xd6 exd6 ½-½.

b2) 8 a5 looks more logical. It is hard to say whether Black should now block White's a-pawn:

b21) 8...a6 (very natural) 9 ♗e3 (9 d5 ♘a7 10 h3 ♗d7 11 ♖e1 e5 12 dxe6 ♗xe6 13 ♗f1 ♖e8 14 ♗f4 ♘d7 = Benjamin-Chernin, New York Open 1997) 9...e5 10 d5 ♘e7 11 ♘d2 and here:

b211) 11...♗d7 12 ♘a4 ♗xa4!? 13 ♖xa4 ♘d7 14 b4 (Glek gives 14 c4 c5 15 b4 ±) 14...f5 15 f3 ♖f7! 16 c4 (according to Glek, 16 g4! ♕f8 17 h4 is stronger) 16...♕f8 17 c5 ♗h6 is unclear, Glek-Gurevich, Vlissingen 1997. This is not such a bad King's Indian, though White's queenside pawns look threatening.

b212) Perhaps better is 11...♗xe2 12 ♕xe2 ♕d7 13 ♘a4 ♘h5 14 c4 f5 15 f3 fxe4!? 16 ♘xe4 ♘f5 17 g3 ♖f7 18 ♗f2 ♗h6 19 ♕d3?! (19 ♔h1 is unclear) 19...♖af8 with counterplay since f3 is weak, Palac-Lechtynsky, Rimavska Sobota 1990.

b22) 8...e5 (allowing White to play a6) 9 d5 ♘e7 10 a6 b6 and then:

b221) 11 ♗g5 h6 12 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 13 ♘e1 ♗d7 14 ♗g4 ♗e8! 15 ♘d3 ♗g7 16 ♘b4 f5 ∓ Benjamin-Gufeld, Honolulu 1998.

b222) 11 ♘e1 ♗d7 12 ♘d3 c6!? 13 dxc6 ♗xc6 14 ♗f3 ♖c8 (better is 14...♘xe4! 15 ♘xe4 d5 =) 15 ♘b4 ♗a8 16 ♕d3 ± Wolff-Manion, Philadelphia 1994.

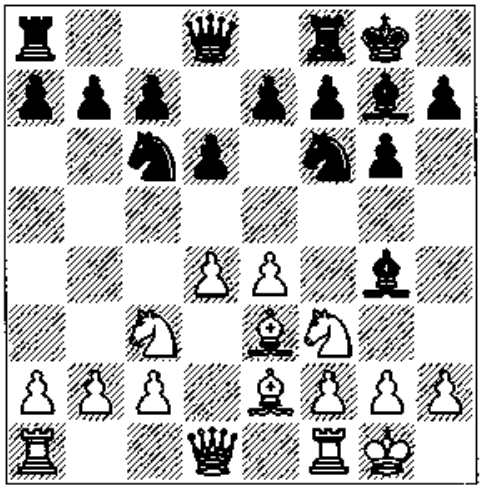
A)

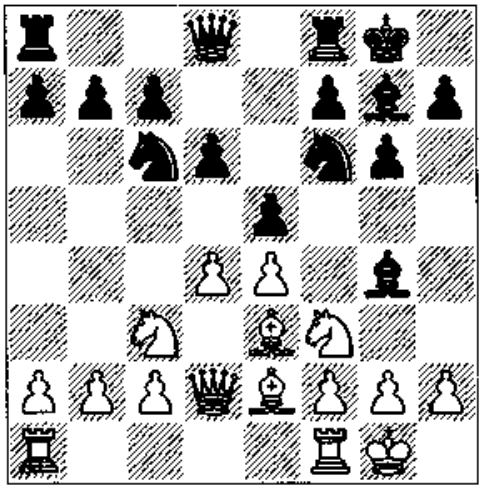
7 ♗e3 ♘c6 *(D)*

Now:

A1: 8 ♕d2 177
A2: 8 d5 180

There are a few alternatives:





a) 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♗xf3 transposes to note 'b' to White's 9th move in Line B.

b) 8 ♘d2 (a rather unambitious move) 8...♗xe2 9 ♕xe2 ♘d7 (9...e5) 10 ♘b3 e5 11 d5 ♘e7 12 ♖ad1 ♔h8 13 ♘a5 ♕c8 14 b4 f5 15 f3 ♘g8 = Rozentalis-Lugovoi, Neum ECC 2000.

c) The clumsy-looking 8 ♕d3 allows Black to equalize easily with 8...e5 9 d5 ♘e7:

c1) 10 h3?! ♗c8 11 ♘d2 ♘d7 12 ♘c4 f5 gave Black rapid counterplay in Gligorić-Nunn, Baden 1980.

c2) 10 ♖ad1 ♘h5!? 11 ♘b1 ♘f4 12 ♗xf4 exf4 13 c3 ♗xf3 14 ♗xf3 g5 15 ♘d2 ♘g6 = Sulskis-J.Schmidt, Germany 1995/6. Black has a nice grip on the e5-square.

c3) 10 ♘d2 ♗xe2 11 ♘xe2 ♘g4 12 ♗g5 c6!? 13 h3 ♗f6 14 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 = Gligorić-Azmaiparashvili, Erevan 1989.

A1)

8 ♕d2

This is the most natural move.

8...e5 *(D)*

9 d5

The conclusion has been reached that there is not much life in the line 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♖ad1 ♕c8 11 ♕c1 (11 h3 ♖d8 12 ♕c1 ♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♘d4 = 14 ♗xd4 exd4 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 exd5 ♕d7 17 ♕d2 ♕b5 and Black even possesses a slight initiative, Britton-Lawton, London 1984) 11...♖d8 12 ♖xd8+ and now both recaptures are OK:

a) The most popular 'equalizer' has been 12...♕xd8 13 ♖d1 ♕f8 14 h3 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 h5 with the plan of ...♔h7 and ...♗h6. However, the position is far from dead as yet. The logical continuation is 16 ♘b5 ♖c8 17 c3 ♔h7 18 ♘a3 (18 g4!?) 18...♗h6 19 ♘c4 ♗xe3 20 ♘xe3 ♖d8 21 ♘d5 ♘e8 with a very slight initiative for White, Motwani-Emms, British Ch (Edinburgh) 1985.

b) 12...♘xd8 is a good plan since e6 is an ideal square for the knight. Now:

b1) After 13 h3 ♗xf3 14 ♗xf3 ♘e6 15 ♖d1 (½-½ Varga-C.Horvath, Budapest 1994) 15...c6 the solid nature of the position and strong knight on e6 compensate for the bishop-pair. In

Kaidanov-Wolff, Hastings Masters 1990, Black even got slight plus after 16 ♘e2 ♕c7 17 c3 a5 18 ♕c2 ♗f8 19 ♗g4 ♘xg4 20 hxg4 ♗c5.

b2) 13 ♖d1 ♘e6 = 14 ♘xe5 (a draw was agreed here in the game Atalik-McNab, Moscow OL 1994) 14...♗xe2 15 ♘xe2 ♘xe4 16 ♘d3 ♕e8 is very drawish since neither side has any weaknesses.

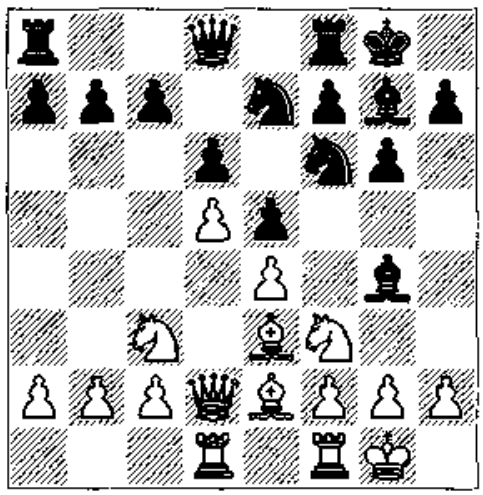
9...♘e7 10 ♖ad1 *(D)*

The main idea of this move is to stop Black playing ...c6. Experience has shown that allowing this gives Black good counterplay:

a) 10 h3?! ♗d7 11 ♘h2 c6! (better than 11...♘xe4 12 ♘xe4 f5 13 f3 ±) 12 dxc6 ♗xc6 13 ♗f3 d5! 14 ♗c5 ♖e8 15 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 16 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 17 exd5 e4 18 ♗e2 ♕xd5 with a slight advantage for Black, Kobaliya-Gubanov, St Petersburg 1995.

b) 10 ♘e1?! ♗xe2 11 ♕xe2 c6! 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 ♖d1 d5 14 ♗c5 ♖e8 15 ♘d3 ♕c7 16 ♗a3 ♖ad8, Vokač-Jansa, Czechoslovak Ch 1986.

B



10...♗d7

10...b5?! was popular after Azmaiparashvili beat Karpov with Black, but it has been considered dubious because of 11 a3 (or the immediate 11 ♗xb5) 11...a5 12 ♗xb5 (12 b4 axb4 13 axb4 ♖a3 14 ♗g5 ♖xc3 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf3 16 ♗xf3 ♖a3 17 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 = Karpov-Azmaiparashvili, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1983) 12...♗xf3 (12...♘xe4 13 ♘xe4 f5 14 ♘eg5 ±) 13 gxf3 ♘h5 14 ♔h1 f5 15 ♗g5 ♗f6 16 ♖g1 ♗xg5 17 ♕xg5 ♘f4 18 ♕h4 ± Enders-Buchal, German Ch (Binz) 1995. However, the practical results have been good for Black since not many players dare to take the pawn.

11 ♘e1

After 11 ♗h6 Black has several options including 11...♗xh6 (other possibilities are 11...♘h5, 11...♘e8 and 11...♘c8) 12 ♕xh6 ♔h8 13 ♘e1 ♘eg8, and then:

a) 14 ♕d2 ♕e7 15 f4 exf4 16 ♖xf4 ♗e8 17 ♕d4 ♕e5 18 ♕f2 (Planinc-Ree, Wijk aan Zee 1974) 18...♕e7 19 ♘d3 ♘d7 =.

b) 14 ♕e3 ♕e7 15 f4 exf4 16 ♕xf4 ♖ae8 17 ♖d4 a6 18 a4 ♗c8 = threatening to occupy e5 with the knight, Degerman-Kaiszauri, Stockholm Rilton Cup 1980.

In this type of closed position it is not usually logical for White to exchange the dark-squared bishops.

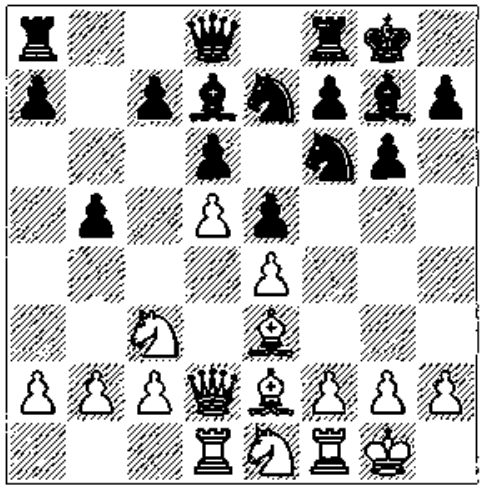
11...b5! *(D)*

In this position the ...b5 advance, coupled with the plan of ...♕b8, ...♖d8 and ...c6, has been considered sound for Black.

12 a3

White has also tried:

W



a) 12 f3 ♕b8 13 ♘d3 ♖d8!? (or 13...a5 14 ♘f2?! ♘h5! 15 g4 ♘f4 16 ♗xf4 exf4 17 ♘b1 g5! 18 b3 ♘g6 19 c4 b4 ∓ Sicker-Rinaldi, corr. 1990) 14 a3 a5 15 ♘f2 c6 16 dxc6 ♗xc6 17 b4 axb4 18 axb4 ♕b7 19 ♖a1 (Mus-Paul, corr. 1991) and now 19...d5! is good.

b) 12 ♘d3 ♕b8 13 b4 c6 14 f4!? and now:

b1) There is a long variation leading to a draw: 14...cxd5!? 15 fxe5 ♘xe4 16 ♘xe4 dxe4 17 ♘c5 (17 exd6 ♕xd6 18 ♗c5 ♗d4+ ∓) 17...dxc5 18 ♕xd7 ♘f5 19 ♗xc5 ♗xe5 20 ♖xf5 gxf5 21 ♗xf8 ♗xh2+ 22 ♔h1 ♕xf8 23 ♔xh2 ♕h6+ 24 ♔g1 ♕e3+ 25 ♔f1 ♕f4+ =.

b2) 14...exf4 15 ♘xf4?! (critical is 15 ♗xf4 cxd5 16 e5 dxe5 17 ♘xe5 with a complicated position) 15...cxd5 16 ♘fxd5 ♘exd5 17 exd5 ♖e8 ∓ Perez-Schüssler, Santa Clara 1996.

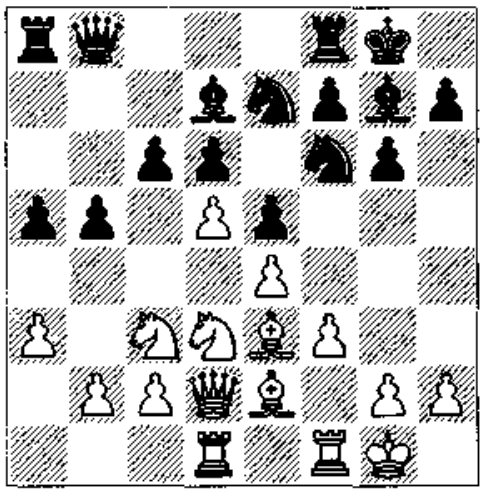
12...a5 13 ♘d3

13 b4 axb4 14 axb4 ♖a3 15 ♗g5 (15 f3 ♕b8 16 ♘d3 c6) 15...♖xc3! 16 ♗xf6 ♖a3 17 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 18 f4 f6 with equality, Brunner-Fioramonti, Switzerland 1992.

13...♕b8 14 f3 c6! *(D)*

This typical plan of counterplay is sometimes prepared with ...♖d8. Here, however, 14...♖d8 is met by 15 b4 axb4 16 ♘xb4! ♖xa3 17 ♖a1 ♖xa1 18 ♖xa1, when Black's counterplay has been prevented at the cost of a pawn, Kuczynski-Chernin, Polanica Zdroj 1992.

W



15 dxc6 ♗xc6 16 b4

Or:

a) 16 ♘f2!? ♖d8 transposes to note 'a' to White's 12th move.

b) The idea 16 ♗h6 b4 17 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 18 axb4 axb4 19 ♘b1 ♕b6+ 20 ♔h1 ♖ab8 21 c4 bxc3 22 ♘xc3 ♖fd8 = doesn't look very logical for White, Barlov-Jansa, Bor 1985.

16...d5!

The other key move of Black's counterplay.

17 ♗c5 ♖e8

Now:

a) 18 ♘f2?! axb4 19 axb4 d4 20 ♘b1 ♖a2 21 ♘d3 ♘d7 ∓ Kuczynski-Chernin, Budapest Z 1993.

b) White should perhaps content himself with the drawish line 18 ♗xe7

♖xe7 19 exd5 ♘xd5 20 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 21 bxa5 ♕a7+ 22 ♔h1 ♕xa5 23 ♕xa5 ♖xa5 24 ♘b4 ♗b7 25 ♖d8+ ♗f8 =.

c) There is also the very complicated line 18 bxa5 dxe4 19 ♘b4 exf3 20 gxf3 ♗d7 21 a6 (Kaminski-Finkel, Groningen open 1993) 21...♘f5!, when White's ragged position guarantees Black counterplay.

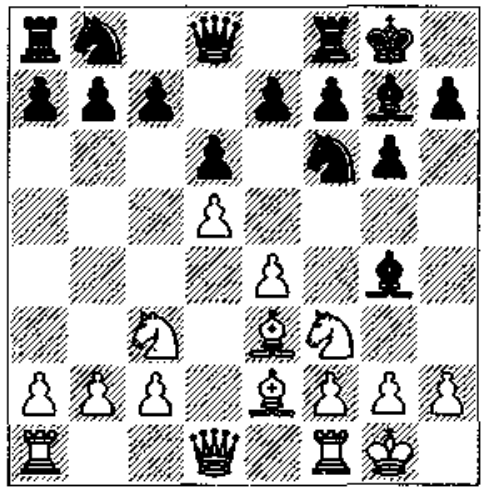
Conclusion: The old main line is perfectly OK for Black and White can expect no advantage after 9 d5 or after the almost dead 9 dxe5.

A2)

8 d5

This move became very popular after White's possibilities were exhausted in the 8 ♕d2 line.

8...♘b8 *(D)*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This surprising approach has become popular during the last few years and no refutation or any definite advantage for White has been found yet. In the old line 8...♗xf3 9 ♗xf3 ♘e5 10 ♗e2 c6 11 f4 (or 11 a4 ♕a5 12 ♖a3 ♘ed7) 11...♘ed7 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 ♕d3 ± Black has encountered some problems though the last word has hardly been said yet.

9 a4

Maybe the most critical, but White has several other more or less sensible moves:

a) 9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♗xf3 c6 (alternatively, 10...♘bd7 11 a4 a5 12 ♗e2 c6 13 ♖e1 ♕c7 = Kindermann-Anand, Munich 1991) 11 a4 (11 g3 ♘bd7 12 ♗g2 ♕a5 13 ♕d2 ♖fc8 14 ♖ad1 cxd5 15 exd5 ♘e5 16 ♕e2 ♘c4 17 ♗c1 b5 gives Black counterplay, Unzicker-Roth, Bavaria 1994/5) 11...a5 12 ♘b1!? (a surprising regrouping plan but it is better than no plan at all) 12...♘bd7 13 g3 ♘b6 14 ♗g2 ♕c7 15 ♖a2 ♖fe8 16 b3 ♘fd7 17 c4 ♘b8 18 ♕d2 ♘6d7 19 ♘c3 ♘a6 = Arbakov-Chernin, Berne 1995.

b) 9 ♘d4 ♗xe2 10 ♕xe2 c5!? (another idea is 10...c6) 11 ♘f3 (11 dxc6 ♘xc6 =) 11...♕b6 12 ♖ab1 ♕a6 = Chatalbashev-Popchev, Čačak 1991.

c) 9 ♕d2 c6 10 ♖ad1 (10 a4 is possible) 10...♕a5 11 a3 ♖c8 (11...♘fd7!? is unclear) 12 b4 ♕c7 13 ♗d4 ♘bd7 14 ♖fe1 a5 with counterplay, Blatny-Chernin, Pardubice 1993.

d) 9 ♖e1 c6 10 ♕d2 ♕c7 11 ♖ad1 ♘bd7 12 ♗h6 ♗xh6 13 ♕xh6 ♗xf3 14 ♗xf3 a6 = Rõtšagov-Chernin, Erevan OL 1996.

e) 9 ♘d2 ♗xe2 10 ♘xe2!? (after 10 ♕xe2 c6 White cannot play 11 ♘c4? due to 11...♘xe4! 12 ♘xe4 cxd5 ∓) 10...c6 11 c4 ♘g4 (since the exchange of bishops only benefits White, Black should try either 11...♖e8 followed by ...e6 or the natural 11...♘bd7) 12 ♗d4

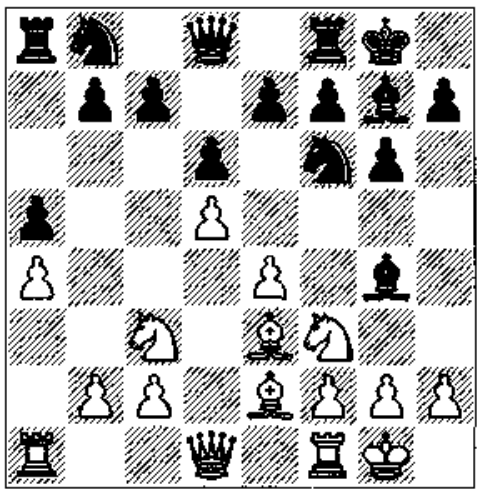
♘d7 13 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♘f3 ± Moldovan-Marin, Bucharest Ciocaltea mem 1997.

f) The most interesting of White's knight moves is 9 ♘g5!? ♗xe2 10 ♕xe2 c6 11 ♖ad1 ♕a5!? 12 f4 ♕a6 (12...♕b4!? 13 ♗c1 ♘bd7) 13 ♕f3 ♘bd7 14 ♕h3 h6 15 ♘f3, Ziatdinov-Chernin, New York Open 1998, and now according to Yudasin Black should play 15...♘b6 with some counterplay (c4 and d5 are weak) to compensate for White's pressure on the kingside.

9...a5 *(D)*

9...♗xf3!? 10 ♗xf3 a5 (½-½ Golubev-Chernin, Biel 1995) leads to similar positions as note 'a' to White's 9th move. White has saved a tempo but it is not very important in such a static position.

W



Now:

a) 10 ♘d4 is not dangerous for Black at all. There are no weak points in Black's position and his pieces are well placed. 10...♗xe2 11 ♕xe2 c6 12 f3 ♕c7 13 ♖ad1 ♘a6 14 ♕d2 (intending to exchange dark-squared bishops with ♗h6, which explains Black's next move) 14...♖fe8 15 ♖fe1 ♘b4 = 16 ♘b3 ♘d7 17 ♗d4 ♖ac8 18 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 19 ♕d4+ ♔g8 20 ♖d2 ♕b6!? (basically it is a good idea to exchange queens in this type of position but because of the a5-pawn this tactical solution leads to complications) 21 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 22 ♘xa5 ♖a8 23 ♘xb7 ♖eb8 24 dxc6 (Kaspi gives the following long variation: 24 a5 ♘c4 25 ♖d4 cxd5 26 ♘xd5 ♘xc2 27 ♖xc4 ♘xe1 28 ♘xe7+ ♔g7 29 ♖c7 ♖a7 30 a6 ♖xa6 31 ♘c8 ♖a1 32 ♔f2 ♘d3+ 33 ♔e3 ♖c1 34 ♖xc1 ♘xc1 35 ♘cxd6 ♖a8 with equality) 24...♘xc6 25 ♘xd6 exd6 26 ♖xd6 ♘b4 27 b3 ♘xc2 28 ♖c1 and from here Rozentalis-Ponomariov, Belfort 1998 was soon drawn. This material balance (three pawns for a knight) doesn't give either side an advantage.

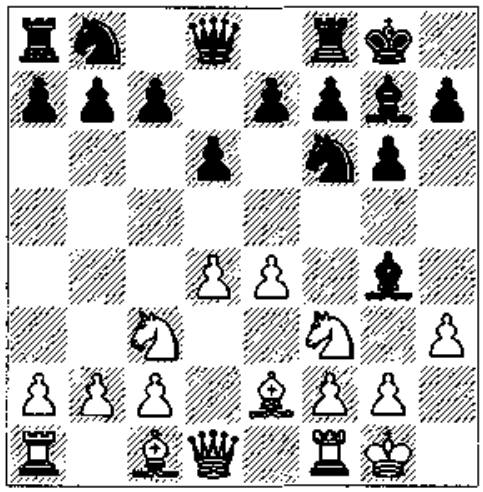
b) The other plan, 10 ♘d2 ♗xe2 11 ♕xe2 c6 12 ♘c4, is somewhat more dangerous. Because of the b6-square, 12...♘xe4 is not possible now. Black must decide which knight belongs on d7. In Sutovsky-Chernin, Rishon le Zion 1994, Black decided that it is important to eliminate the strong knight on c4: 12...♘fd7 13 ♖ad1 ♘e5 (the alternative 13...♕c7 14 ♗d4 ♘a6 15 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 16 ♖fe1 ♘b4 17 e5 ± gave White some initiative in Malishauskas-Marin, Elista OL 1998) 14 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 15 ♗d4 (15 ♕d2!? ♘d7 16 f4 or the immediate 15 f4 might be slightly more promising) 15...♗xd4 16 ♖xd4 ♘d7 17 ♖d3 ♕b6 = 18 ♖h3 ♘f6 19 ♕d2 h5 20 ♔h1 cxd5 21 exd5 ♕xb2 22 ♖b1 ♕a3 23 g4?? (instead of this desperate attack, the position is less

clear after 23 ♖xb7) 23...♘xg4 24 ♖g1 ♖ac8 −+.

Conclusion: This approach has become popular in recent years and White has not yet found a very critical test, although he might have something after 10 ♘d2. In most cases Black gets a very solid position.

B)

7 h3 *(D)*



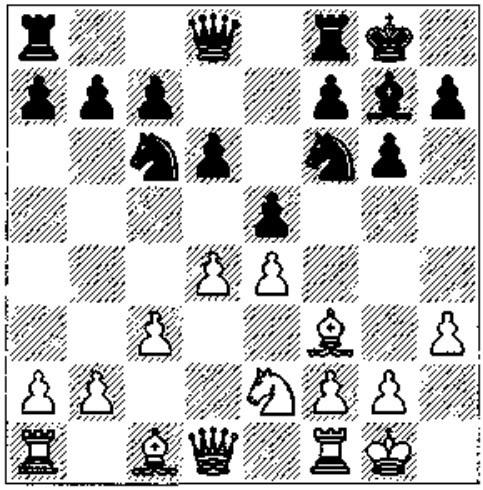
7...♗xf3 8 ♗xf3 ♘c6 9 ♘e2

It is important to protect d4 with a pawn. Otherwise:

a) The somewhat strange move 9 ♘b5, aiming for the same thing, is not a big problem for Black: 9...e5 10 c3 a6 (10...♔h8!?) 11 ♘a3 exd4 12 cxd4 ♘d7 13 ♗e3 ♘b6 14 ♕d2 d5! 15 e5 f6 16 exf6 ♕xf6 = Okhotnik-Petran, Cappelle la Grande 1989.

b) 9 ♗e3 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♘e2 ♕e7 12 c3 is rather drawish: 12...♖fb8!? (this keeps the d8-square free for the knight which heads for e6; of course, the more natural 12...a5 and 12...♖fd8 13 ♕c2 a5 = are not bad either) 13 ♕c2 (13 b4 a5 14 b5 ♘d8 15 ♕a4 ♘e6 16 ♖fd1 h5 17 ♖d2 ♔h7 18 ♖ad1 ♗h6 = Plachetka-Azmaiparashvili, Stary Smokovec 1983; 13 ♘c1 a5 14 ♕c2 ♘d8 15 ♘b3 ♘e6 16 ♘d2 ♘e8 17 ♖fd1 ♗f6 18 g3 ♗g5 = Short-Azmaiparashvili, Baku 1983) 13...a5 14 a4 ♘d8 15 ♖fd1 ♘e6 = Karpeshov-Azmaiparashvili, Volgodonsk 1983.

9...e5 10 c3 *(D)*



10...♘d7

Or:

a) 10...♖e8 invites White to close the position with some spatial advantage after 11 d5 ♘e7 12 c4 ♘d7 13 ♘c3 ♔h8 14 g3 ♘g8 15 h4 (15 ♗g2 ♗h6 =) 15...♗h6 16 ♗xh6 ♘xh6 17 ♕d2 ♔g7 18 ♗g2 a5 (though 18...f5 19 exf5 ♘xf5 20 ♘e4 h6 is level according to Gavrilov) 19 ♗h3 ♘c5 20 ♖ae1 ± Keitlinghaus-Gavrilov, Pardubice 1995.

b) 10...♔h8!? will be a more useful move if White closes the position; for example, 11 b4 ♕e8 12 d5 (after 12 ♖b1 Black should continue 12...exd4

13 cxd4 ♘xe4 14 b5 ♘a5 15 ♕c2 d5 16 ♕xc7 ♕d8 = according to Yudasin) 12...♘e7 13 c4 a5 14 bxa5 ♖xa5 15 ♕b3 ♕a8 (15...b6! is better according to Stohl) 16 ♗d2 ♖a6 17 ♘c3 ♘d7 18 ♘b5 ♕b8 19 ♗b4 f5 (19...♘c5 20 ♕e3 b6 is unclear) 20 ♖fd1 b6 21 a4 ± Hraček-Chernin, Brno 1993.

c) Another option is 10...♕e8!? 11 d5 ♘e7 12 c4 ♘d7 13 ♘c3 f5 14 ♖b1 (Illescas-Stohl, Khalkidhiki 1992) and after 14...a5 White's advantage is very small at best.

11 b3 *(D)*

This move is generally considered to give White a slight advantage. There are alternatives:

a) 11 ♖b1 a5! 12 ♗e3 (12 b3 ♕h4!? 13 ♔h2 ♖ae8 14 d5 ♘cb8 15 c4 f5 16 ♘c3 ♘c5 = Petursson-Azmaiparashvili, Philadelphia 1994) 12...a4 13 ♕d3 ♔h8 = is OK for Black. Now White blundered with 14 g3? exd4 15 cxd4 ♘de5 ∓ in Kamsky-Azmaiparashvili, Brussels rpd 1992.

b) The natural 11 ♗e3 ♘b6 seems quite safe for Black:

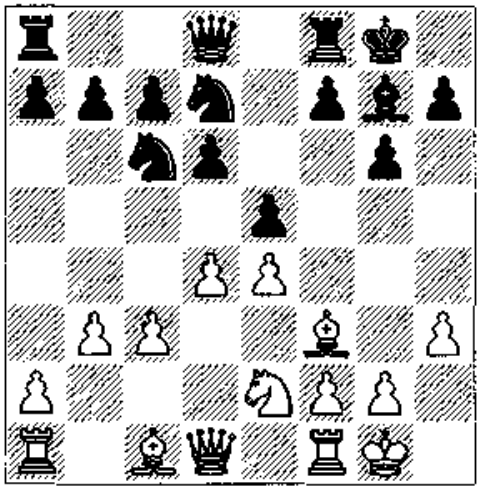
b1) 12 b3 exd4 13 cxd4 d5! 14 e5 f6 15 exf6 ♕xf6 =.

b2) 12 d5 ♘e7 13 ♕d3 f5 14 c4 ♘d7 15 ♘c3 ♘f6 (15...a5!? is probably better: Black should fix the queenside first) 16 b4 f4 17 ♗d2 h5 18 h4 ± De Jong-Berelovich, Groningen 1995.

b3) 12 ♕b3 ♘a5 13 ♕c2 ♘ac4 14 ♗c1 exd4 15 ♘xd4 ♕h4 16 ♗e2 ♖fe8 17 b3 ♘e5 18 f4 ♘c6 19 ♘xc6 bxc6 20 ♗f3 ♖ab8 gave Black counterplay in Gomez Esteban-Morović, Mesa 1992.

Now (after 11 b3):

B



a) 11...♘b6?! (the knight is not well placed here in the forthcoming closed position) 12 d5 ♘e7 13 c4 f5 14 ♘c3 ♘d7 15 ♖b1 a5 16 a3 ♘f6 17 b4 axb4 18 axb4 fxe4 19 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 20 ♗xe4 ♘f5 21 g3 ± Ivanchuk-Timman, Linares 1989. White has some spatial advantage. In the typical King's Indian position the e4-square is usually more important than d4 for the black knight.

b) 11...♔h8 is more interesting (although a draw was agreed here in Volzhin-Yakovich, Barbera 1999). After the natural 12 ♗e3 the active response 12...f5 13 exf5 gxf5 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 ♗xc6 bxc6 16 f4 ± gives White a more solid pawn-formation. Black can also experiment with 12...♘e7!? 13 ♕d2 c6 or 12...♕h4!? 13 ♕d2 h6.

Conclusion: This is probably the theoretically best way for White to play the Classical Pirc and is quite solid. White has some chances for a small plus but Black has several possibilities and the theory has not yet been exhausted. Very often the play will take on a King's Indian nature.

23 The Pirc with ♗e3

♗e3 is a flexible move which enables White to choose between various plans. One of the main ideas for White is to exchange the dark-squared bishops with ♕d2 and ♗h6 and in some cases build up an attack on the kingside. It makes sense for Black to wait with the bishop on f8 and develop his own counterplay on the queenside. This idea works quite well after the immediate 4 ♗e3 (Line C). The main line of B is quite solid but can be reached in our repertoire only in the move-order 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e3 (since after 4 ♗e3 we are recommending 4...c6). In Line A, White plays an early h3, which may be followed by various plans that tend to be more positional in nature.

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6

Now we consider three systems with ♗e3:

A: 4 h3 ♗g7 5 ♗e3	184
B: 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e3	188
C: 4 ♗e3	190

Naturally, there are plenty of possible transpositions between these three lines.

A)

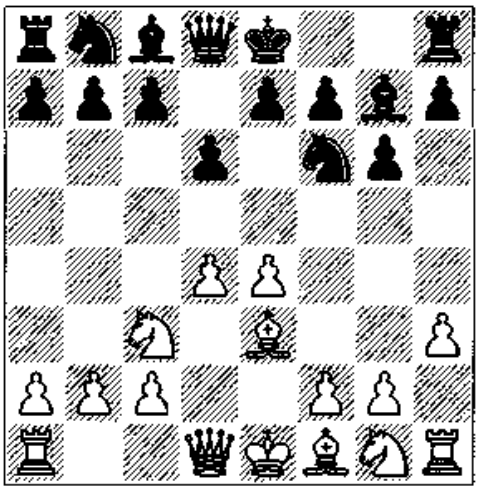
4 h3 ♗g7 5 ♗e3 *(D)*

5...c6 6 a4

Or:

a) 6 ♘f3 0-0 7 ♕d2 ♘bd7 (7...b5 8 ♗d3 ♘bd7 9 e5! is rather dangerous for Black) 8 ♗d3 (8 ♗h6 e5 9 0-0-0 ♕a5 10 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 11 ♔b1 b5 12 ♘e2 ♕xd2 13 ♘xd2 ♗b7 = Tiviakov-Shirov, Linares 1995) 8...♕c7 9 0-0 b5 transposes to Line C2.

B



b) 6 f4!? is a sharp move, trying to argue that ...c6 is no more useful for Black in the Austrian Attack than h3 is for White. Now:

b1) 6...♕b6!? (taking the challenge) 7 ♕c1 ♘h5!? (7...0-0) 8 ♘ge2 f5 9 e5 0-0?! (Marin thinks 9...♘a6 10 ♖g1 g5 11 g3 c5 gives Black counterplay though the h5-knight might get into trouble after 12 dxc5 ♘xc5 13 ♘d5 ♕d8 14 ♘ec3) 10 ♖g1 g5 11 g3 ± Hraček-Marin, Krynica Z 1998.

b2) 6...0-0 (this is safer) 7 ♘f3 (7 ♕f3 ♕a5 8 ♗d3 b5 9 ♘ge2 b4 10 ♘d1 ♗b7 11 0-0 c5 12 d5 ♘bd7 13 c4 bxc3 14 ♘exc3 ♗a6 15 ♗xa6 ♕xa6 =

Sveshnikov-Ponomariov, Bled 1999) 7...♘bd7 and then:

b21) 8 e5 seems to give White nothing: 8...dxe5 9 dxe5 ♘d5! 10 ♘xd5 cxd5 11 ♗d3 (11 ♕d2 ♘b6) 11...b6 12 0-0 ♘c5 13 b4 ♘xd3 14 cxd3 f6 = Sveshnikov-Ibragimov, Bled 1996.

b22) 8 ♗d3 e5!? (8...♕a5) 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 fxe5 ♘e8 11 e6 (11 ♗g5 ♕b6 12 ♗e7 ♘xe5 gives Black compensation) 11...fxe6 12 0-0 (12 ♗c4 ♕e7) 12...♘d6 13 ♕e2 ♘f7 14 ♗c4 ♕e7 15 a4 ♘de5 = Cu.Hansen-Høi, Copenhagen 1995.

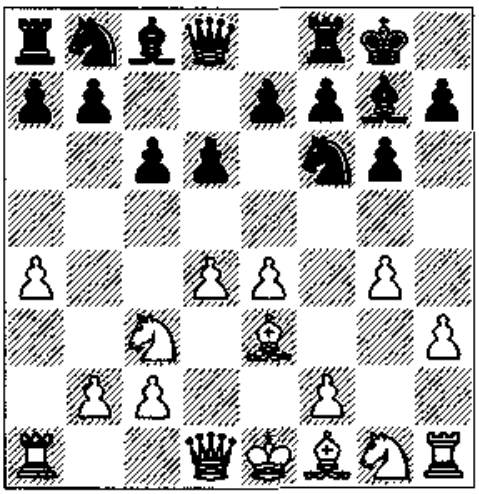
6...0-0 7 ♘f3

Or:

a) 7 a5 is met by 7...d5! 8 e5 ♘e4 9 ♘xe4 dxe4 10 ♗c4 c5 11 dxc5?! (11 c3 cxd4 12 cxd4 ♘c6 13 ♕d2 = is better according to Glek) 11...♕c7! 12 e6?! f5 13 c3 f4 14 ♗d4 ♘c6 ∓ Piket-Glek, Wijk aan Zee 1997.

b) 7 g4!? *(D)* is a dangerous idea of GM Rantanen's which is usually neglected by theory.

B



No simple equalizer has been demonstrated yet:

b1) The most natural move, 7...e5, may be somewhat inadequate, as current practice shows:

b11) 8 ♗g2 d5!? (routine moves tend to lead to trouble) 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘xd5 cxd5 11 dxe5 ♗xe5 12 c3 ♗e6 13 ♘f3 (13 ♘e2 ♘c6 14 0-0 f5 is unclear) 13...♗g7 14 ♗d4 ♘c6 15 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 16 0-0 ♕b6 was close to equality in Pulkkinen-Mäki, Finland 1993.

b12) 8 dxe5!? (this is an interesting moment to exchange queens because of the vulnerability of f7) 8...dxe5 9 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 and now White has surprisingly good chances after either of the sensible developing moves:

b121) 10 ♘f3 h5? (certainly the alternative plan suggested by Mäki is better: 10...♘fd7 11 0-0-0 h6 12 ♗c4 ♖e8 ±) 11 ♗c4 hxg4 12 ♘g5 ♖f8 13 ♗c5 +– R.Lehtivaara-Hodgson, London Lloyds Bank 1989.

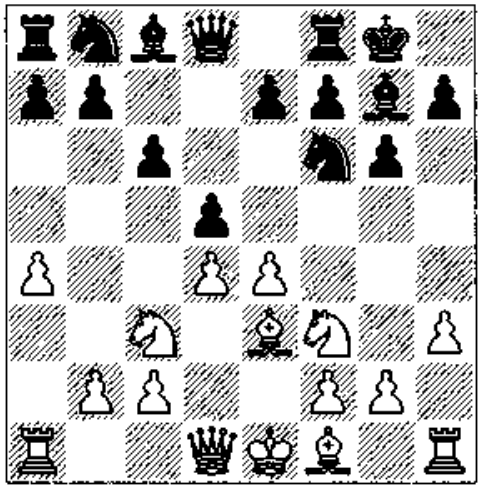
b122) 10 ♗c4 ♘bd7?! (10...♘e8 11 ♘f3 h6 12 g5 h5 13 ♘h4! ♘d6 14 0-0-0 ± is not good, so Black should try 10...♘a6!? ± or 10...♘fd7!?) 11 0-0-0 b6 12 ♘f3 ♗b7? 13 ♘g5 ♖f8 14 ♘xf7 +– Norri-Keskisarja, Helsinki Ch 1996.

b2) 7...d5!? is a straightforward strike in the centre, and offers Black more hope. After 8 e5 ♘e4 9 ♘xe4 (9 ♘ce2 f6) 9...dxe4 10 ♗g2, 10...f5 needs testing, while in Rantanen-Wedberg, Eksjö 1981, 10...c5!? 11 ♗xe4 (11 c3!?) 11...cxd4 12 ♗xd4 ♘c6 13 ♗xc6 bxc6 14 ♗c3 ♕c7 15 ♕e2 offered Black some compensation.

b3) 7...♕a5 is another possibility. 8 ♕d2 (8 ♗g2?! d5 9 e5 ♘e4 =) 8...e5

(8...b5 9 b4! ♕xb4 10 ♖b1 ♕a5 11 axb5 is pretty dangerous for Black) 9 ♗g2 ♘bd7 (maybe 9...♗e6!? 10 ♘ge2 ♗c4 to activate the bishop is worth trying, though in Aleksandrov-Sulskis, Minsk 1996 Black got into trouble after 11 ♖d1 ♘bd7?! 12 dxe5 ♘xe5 13 f4 ±) 10 ♘ge2 ♖e8 11 0-0 ♘b6 12 b3 exd4 13 ♗xd4 d5 14 exd5 ♘bxd5 15 ♖ad1 ♘xc3 16 ♘xc3 (16 ♗xc3! ♕c7 17 ♖fe1 ±) 16...♕c7 17 ♕g5 h6 18 ♕h4 ♘h7 = Rantanen-Yrjölä, Helsinki 1984.

7...d5 *(D)*



This is the most straightforward and logical approach.

8 e5

Not very ambitious is 8 ♗d3 dxe4 9 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 (or 9...♘d5 10 ♗d2 a5 = 11 0-0 b6, Espig-Bologan, Dresden 1996) 10 ♗xe4 c5!? (10...♗f5 11 ♗xf5 ♕a5+ is the simplest equalizer) 11 c3 ♘d7 12 dxc5 ♕c7 13 ♕b3 ♘xc5 14 ♕c4 b6!? 15 ♘d4 ♗a6 16 ♘b5 ♖ac8 = Espig-Schmidt, 2nd Bundesliga 1991/2.

8...♘e4 9 ♘xe4

9 ♗d3 ♘xc3 10 bxc3 c5 usually leads to closed positions:

a) 11 ♕d2 ♘c6 12 h4!? and then:

a1) 12...c4 13 ♗e2 f6?! (13...h5) 14 h5 fxe5 15 hxg6 hxg6 16 ♗h6 gave White a dangerous attack in Murshed-Nogueiras, Cienfuegos Capablanca mem 1991.

a2) 12...♕a5 13 h5 cxd4 should be an adequate antidote. Andonov-Zilberman, Frunze 1989 continued 14 cxd4 ♕xd2+ 15 ♗xd2 ♗g4 16 ♘h2 ♗xh5 17 g4 (17 c3 g5) 17...♘xd4 18 gxh5 ♗xe5 with an unclear position.

b) 11 0-0 and now:

b1) 11...♘c6 12 ♕d2 (now White could play 12 ♖e1! c4 13 ♗f1) 12...c4 13 ♗e2 f6 14 exf6 exf6 15 ♖fe1 ♗e6 16 ♘h2 ♕d7 17 ♗g4 ♖ae8 and Black equalized without trouble in Werner-Stangl, Budapest Elekes mem 1990.

b2) The immediate 11...c4 may be slightly more accurate: 12 ♗e2 f6 (or 12...♘c6) 13 exf6 exf6 14 ♕d2 ♘d7!? 15 a5 ♖e8 16 ♖fe1 ♘f8 = Gomez Baillo-Rechlis, Novi Sad OL 1990.

9...dxe4 10 ♘g5

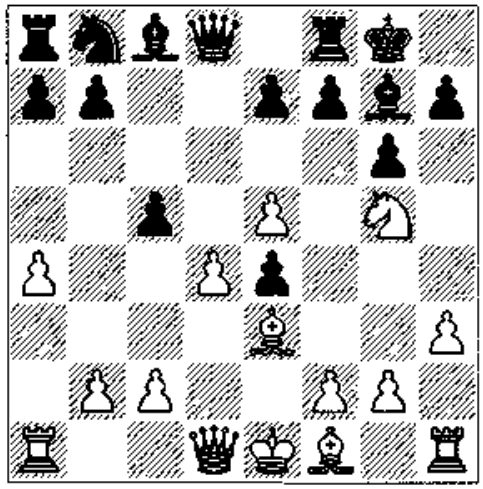
Probably better than 10 ♘d2?! c5 11 ♘xe4 (11 c3!? cxd4 12 cxd4 f5!? gives Black counterplay) 11...cxd4 12 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 13 ♗xd4 ♗f5 14 ♘c5 ♘c6 15 ♗c3 ♗xe5 ∓ Grishanovich-Gubanov, St Petersburg Ch 1997.

10...c5 *(D)*

11 c3

After this move Black gets enough activity with accurate play. Another approach is 11 dxc5 ♕c7, and now:

a) Very unclear and rather unexplored is 12 ♕d5 ♘c6 13 ♕xe4 ♘xe5 (or 13...♗f5 14 ♕f4 ♘xe5 15 0-0-0



b6!?) 14 0-0-0 ♗f5. White has an extra pawn but his king position looks a bit shaky. It must be noted that Nunn and McNab consider this line somewhat better for White but in practice it has been somewhat rare.

b) 12 ♘xe4 ♕xe5 13 ♘c3 ♘c6 seems to give Black enough compensation no matter where White puts his bishop:

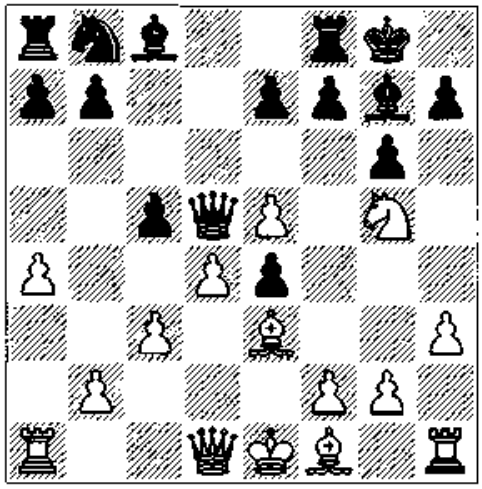
b1) 14 ♗d3 f5! 15 0-0 f4 16 ♗d2 f3 17 ♖e1 ♕xc5 18 ♗e3?! (18 ♘e4) 18...♕b4 19 ♘d5 ♕h4 20 g3 ♕xh3 21 ♘f4 ♖xf4? (better is 21...♕g4 ∓) 22 ♗f1 ♕h5 23 ♗xf4 is unclear, Sutovsky-Hodgson, York 1999.

b2) 14 ♗c4 ♗f5 15 0-0 ♖ad8 16 ♕e2 ♘d4 17 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 (17...♕xd4 is equal) 18 ♕xe5 ♗xe5 19 ♖fe1 ♗f6 20 ♗b3 h5 21 ♖e2 ♖fd8 and Black's bishop-pair and active pieces provide compensation, Lorenz-Espig, Chemnitz 1998.

b4) 14 ♗b5 ♖d8 (14...♗f5!?) 15 ♕e2 ♗e6 16 ♗xc6 bxc6 17 0-0 ♖db8 18 ♘d1 ♕e4 19 f3 ♕c4 = Smyslov-Speelman, Hastings 1988/9.

11...♕d5! *(D)*

This is considered best as 11...cxd4 12 cxd4 ♕d5 13 ♖c1 enables White to play ♗c4.



12 ♕c2

The other possibilities are:

a) 12 dxc5?! ♕xe5 13 ♕d4 ♕xd4 14 cxd4 (14 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 15 cxd4 f5 is more unclear) 14...h6! 15 ♘xe4 f5 16 ♘c3 f4 ∓ 17 ♗d2 ♗xd4 18 ♘d5 ♘c6 19 ♗xf4 (19 ♘xf4?!, Ilinčić-Chernin, Prague 1989, 19...e5 20 ♘d3 e4 21 ♘f4 g5 ∓) 19...♗e6! 20 ♘c7 ♖xf4 21 ♘xa8 ♗xf2+ 22 ♔d2 ♖b4 gives Black strong compensation.

b) 12 f4!? exf3 (12...h6 13 c4 ±) 13 ♕xf3 ♕xf3 (13...♕b3!? looks attractive) 14 gxf3 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♘c6 16 ♗c4 ♗f5 17 ♔e2 ♖ac8 (17...♖ad8!? may be better) 18 ♖ac1 h6 19 ♘e4 ♖fd8 20 ♘g3 e6 (20...♗d7!?) 21 ♘xf5 gxf5 22 ♖hd1 ± Kostakiev-Pyrich, corr. 1991.

12...h6

Also logical is 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 ♘c6 14 ♕xe4 ♕b3 15 ♕d3 (15 ♗b5 h6 16 ♘f3 ♗f5 17 ♕h4 g5 18 ♕g3 ♕b4+ ∓) 15...♕xb2 16 ♖b1 ♕a2 17

♕b5 a6 18 ♕b3 ♕xb3 19 ♖xb3 h6 20 ♘f3 ♗e6 (20...b5!?) 21 ♖xb7 ♖fb8 with good compensation, Rantanen-Mäki, Tampere 2000.

13 ♘xe4 ♗f5 14 f3 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♘c6 16 ♖d1 ♖ac8

Now:

a) White should avoid 17 ♗c4 ♘b4 18 ♗xd5 ♖xc2 ∓.

b) 17 ♕b1 ♕a5+ 18 ♔f2 ♕xa4 19 b3 ♕b4 20 ♗c4 ♘a5 21 ♗d2 ♕b6 22 ♗xa5 ♕xa5 is a little better for Black. In Petrov-Delchev, Sofia 1992, White suffered for his king position: 23 ♕a1 ♕b6 24 ♘c3 ♖fd8 25 ♘d5 ♜xd5 26 ♗xd5 ♖c2+ 27 ♔e3 ♗xe5 28 g4 ♗f4+ 29 ♔xf4 ♜e2 30 ♔g3 ♕d6+ 31 f4 ♕xd5 32 ♖hg1 ♕xb3+ 33 ♔h4 ♖h2 34 ♖g3 g5+ 0-1.

c) 17 ♕d2 ♗xe4 18 fxe4 ♕xe4 19 ♗d3 ♕d5 20 0-0 = is White's best.

Conclusion: Against this method (7 ♘f3) the central break seems to be an adequate antidote but the subline 7 g4!?, called 'the refutation of the Pirc' in Finland, is usually underestimated.

B)

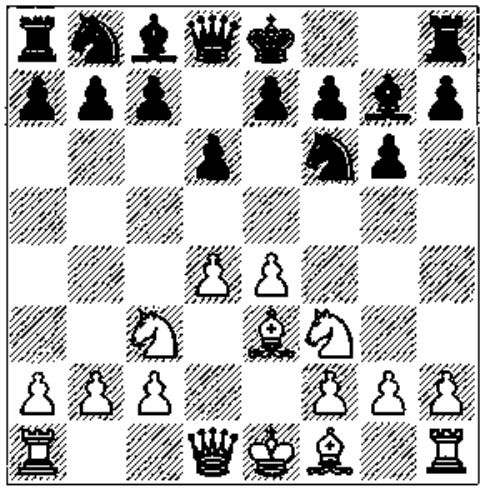
4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e3 *(D)*

5...0-0

This is our recommendation for Black in this position. However, 5...c6 is an important alternative, especially since Black will need to play this position if he follows our proposed repertoire (this position arises via 4 ♗e3 c6 5 ♘f3 ♗g7). After 6 ♕d2, Black has a difficult choice:

a) 6...0-0 7 ♗h6 b5 (7...♗g4 8 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 9 ♘g5 is also slightly better for White) 8 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 9 ♗d3 ± is hardly to be recommended.

B



b) 6...♗g4 and then:

b1) 7 h3!? ♗xf3 8 gxf3 d5! 9 0-0-0 e6 10 h4 ♘h5?! (10...♘bd7 is unclear) 11 ♘e2! ♘d7 12 ♘g3 ♘xg3 13 fxg3 h5 14 ♔b1 ± Piket-Minasian, Montecatini Terme 2000.

b2) 7 ♗e2 0-0 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♗xf3 ♘bd7 10 0-0 ♕c7 11 a4 (11 ♖ad1 b5 12 ♖fe1 ♖ad8 13 a3 a6 14 g3 c5 is equal, Emms-Nunn, Isle of Man 1994) 11...♖fe8 12 ♖fd1 ♖ad8 13 g3 e5 14 d5!? ♘b6 15 ♕d3 a5 ± Gallagher-Cu.Hansen, Reykjavik 1998. Black is quite solid but White has the bishop-pair.

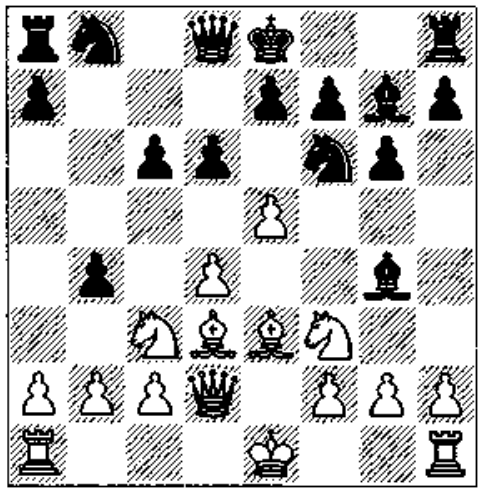
c) 6...♕a5!? is an interesting move favoured by some specialists such as Hodgson and McNab. Then:

c1) Black's idea is to meet 7 ♗d3 with 7...♗g4. After 8 e5!? dxe5 9 ♘xe5 ♘bd7 10 h3 ♗e6 11 ♘xd7 ♘xd7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♖ad1 ♖ad8 Black didn't have any trouble at all in L.Webb-McNab, British League (4NCL) 2000/1.

c2) 7 h3 may be more unpleasant, though after 7...0-0 (7...♘bd7 8 a3?!

0-0 9 ♗d3 e5 10 0-0 ♖e8 11 ♗c4 exd4 12 ♘xd4 ♕c7 13 ♘f3 ♘e5 = Hebden-McNab, London MSO 2000) 8 ♗d3 e5 9 0-0 ♘bd7 10 ♖fd1 exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♖e8 12 ♗h6 ♗xh6 13 ♕xh6 ♕b6 14 ♘b3 a5 15 a4 ♘e5 Black has almost equalized, Kindermann-Shirov, Biel 1995.

d) 6...b5 is the most natural move but not the most solid. 7 ♗d3 ♗g4 8 e5! is the only worry for Black. After 8...b4 *(D)* White has:



d1) 9 ♘e2!? (underestimated by some GMs) 9...♘d5 10 ♗h6 0-0 11 h4! with fair attacking chances:

d11) 11...♗xf3 12 gxf3 dxe5 13 ♗xg7 (13 h5 ♗f6! gives Black compensation) 13...♔xg7 14 h5 transposes to 'd12' but gives White less choice.

d12) 11...dxe5 12 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 13 h5 (13 ♘xe5 ±) 13...♗xf3 14 gxf3 ♘d7! (Black is practically forced to start a king-march towards the queenside) 15 hxg6 hxg6 16 ♕h6+ ♔f6 17 ♖g1!? (17 ♖h5!? ♕c7 is also very critical: Black's position is dangerous but he might survive) 17...♔e6 18 0-0-0 ♔d6 19 dxe5+ ♔c7 20 e6 fxe6 21 ♖xg6 ♖f6 ± S.B.Hansen-Yrjölä, Reykjavik Z 2000.

d2) 9 ♘e4 ♘xe4 (9...♘d5?! 10 ♗h6 is dangerous for Black) 10 ♗xe4 and now:

d21) 10...♗xf3 (for some reason top players have ignored this line) 11 ♗xf3 dxe5 12 0-0-0 exd4 (according to Ftačnik, Black has problems after 12...a5 13 d5) 13 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 14 ♕xd4 ♕xd4 15 ♖xd4 a5 16 ♖hd1 0-0, with the plan of ...e5 and ...f5, is worth considering, though White's compensation guarantees him at least equality.

d22) 10...d5 11 ♗d3 ♗xf3 12 gxf3 ♕b6 13 h4 (13 a3!? bxa3 14 b4 ♘a6 15 c3 ♘c7 16 ♖xa3 0-0 17 ♖a5 ± Nguyen Anh Dung-Postny, Budapest 2000) 13...♘d7 14 h5 c5 (14...e6 may be safer) 15 dxc5 ♘xc5 16 ♗e2 0-0 17 ♕xd5 ♖ac8 18 hxg6 hxg6 19 ♕d4 g5! with dubious complications though Black managed to get a draw in *Deep Junior 6*-Khalifman, Dortmund 2000.

6 ♕d2 e5!

More reliable than 6...♗g4 7 ♘g5!? h6 8 h3 ♗c8 9 ♘f3 ±, when Black has targets on the kingside.

7 dxe5

7 0-0-0!? is an aggressive alternative:

a) 7...exd4 8 ♘xd4 ♖e8 9 f3 ♘c6 10 g4 leads to a line of the Philidor that is rather dangerous for Black.

b) 7...♕e7!? is probably best. 8 ♗g5 (8 ♗h6?! ♗g4 9 d5?! ♗xh6 10 ♕xh6 ♗xf3 11 gxf3 ♘h5 ∓ was positionally excellent for Black in Breutigam-W.Watson, Bundesliga 1999/00) 8...c6 9 ♔b1 (9 h3 b5! 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♕d6

♕xd6 12 ♖xd6 ♗e6 13 ♘d2 ♖c8 14 ♗e2 ♘bd7 15 ♖d1 ♘e8 ∓ Lemmers-Carlier, Belgium 2000) 9...♗g4 (9...b5! should be better) 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 gxf3 ♘bd7 12 h4 ♖fd8 13 d5 c5 14 h5 gave White a dangerous initiative in Duppel-Lederle, Schwäbisch Gmünd 1999.

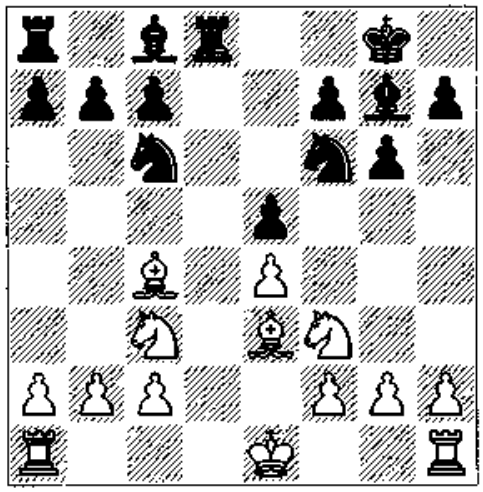
7...dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗c4

The alternatives are not dangerous:

a) 9 ♘xe5?! ♘xe4 10 ♘xe4 ♗xe5 ∓ (then 11 ♗g5 is met by 11...♗xb2).

b) 9 ♗g5 ♖e8 10 ♗d3 h6 11 ♗h4 ♘c6 12 ♘b5 ♖e7 ½-½ Ottosen-Campbell, North Bay 1999.

9...♘c6 *(D)*



10 0-0

The obvious continuation 10 ♘g5 ♖d7 11 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ (11...♘d4!? 12 0-0! ♘e8 13 f4 ♘d6 should also be considered) 12 ♔xd1 ♘d8 13 ♔e2 h6 14 ♖d1 might be more testing, but 14...♗g4+! 15 f3 ♗d7 seems good enough to keep the balance. Still, it is very strange no one has tried this.

10...h6 11 h3 ♘e8!

Defending c7 and heading for d6. The other knight is ready to occupy d4. In this ending Black has nothing to worry about. Now:

a) 12 ♖fd1 ♘d4 13 ♗xd4 exd4 14 ♘d5 ♗e6 15 ♗b3 (the knight gets trapped after 15 ♘xd4? ♗xd4 16 ♖xd4 c6 17 ♘e7+ ♔g7) 15...♘d6!? (this may be unnecessary since Black has several simple moves such as any of the king moves or 15...c6) 16 ♘xc7 ♗xb3 17 cxb3 (17 axb3 ♖ac8 18 e5 is worth considering) 17...♖ac8 18 ♘d5 ♖c5 19 b4 ♖c2 20 ♘xd4?! (after 20 e5 ♘f5 21 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 22 ♖xd4 ♔f8 23 f4 ♖xb2 the active pieces provide compensation for the pawn) 20...♖xb2 21 ♘f3 ♖e8 22 e5 ♘e4 23 ♖ac1?! ♘xf2 24 ♖d4 ♗xe5 ∓ 25 ♖e1 ♘xh3+! 26 ♔h1 ♘f2+ 27 ♔g1 f6 28 ♘xe5 fxe5 29 ♖c4 ♖f8 30 ♖xe5 h5 31 ♘e3 ♖xa2 32 ♖e7 ♖a1+ 33 ♔h2 0-1 Hebden-Sutovsky, Port Erin 1999.

b) 12 ♖ad1 ♘d4 13 ♗xd4 exd4 14 ♘e2 ♘d6 15 ♗d3 c5 16 e5 ♘f5 17 ♘f4 g5 18 ♘h5 ♗e6 = Emms-Ftačnik, Bundesliga 1996/7.

Conclusion: The main line is not dangerous for Black after 6...e5 but the problem is that White has good chances to lure Black into the somewhat unpleasant sublines discussed in the note to Black's 5th move. In these lines the theory is not yet in a static state.

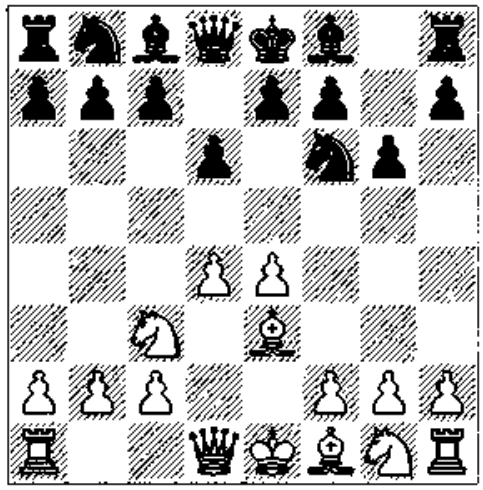
C)

4 ♗e3 *(D)*

4...c6

The motive of this move is not to lose a tempo in the lines where White exchanges the bishops with ♕d2 and

B



♗h6, as in the line 4...♗g7 5 ♕d2 c6 (5...0-0 6 0-0-0 is even riskier for Black) 6 ♗h6 (6 f3 also has more sting than when ...♗g7 has not been played) 6...♗xh6 7 ♕xh6 ♕a5 8 ♗d3 ±.

5 ♕d2

Or:

a) 5 ♘f3 and then:

a1) 5...♗g7 transposes to the note to Black's 5th move in Line B.

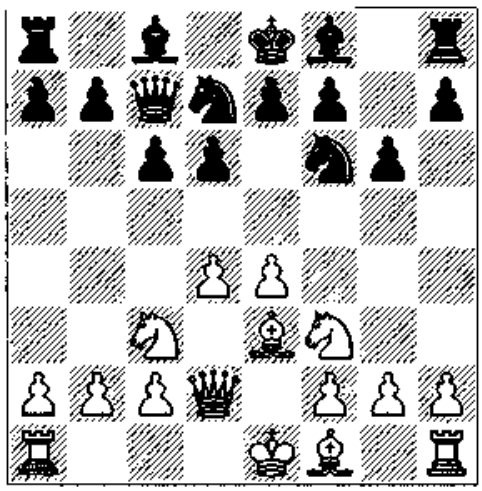
a2) 5...♘bd7!? 6 ♕d2 transposes to the note to Black's 5th move.

b) 5 f3 (this often comes to the same thing as 5 ♕d2) 5...b5 6 g4 (6 ♕d2 transposes to Line C1) 6...♗g7 (the immediate 6...h5!? is not so stupid: 7 g5 ♘fd7 8 f4 ♘b6!? 9 ♘f3 d5 10 ♘e5 b4 11 ♘e2 dxe4 12 ♘g3 ♘d5 with an unclear position, Dimitrov-Llopis, Castello 1995) 7 ♕d2 h5 8 gxh5 (Beliavsky gives 8 g5 ♘fd7 9 ♗d3 ♗b7 10 f4 b4 11 ♘ce2 c5 12 ♘f3 as unclear) 8...♘xh5 9 ♘ge2 ♘d7 10 ♖g1?! (according to Beliavsky, White should play 10 a4 b4 11 ♘d1 a5 12 ♘f2 ♘b6 13 b3 c5 14 c4! with counterplay) 10...♕c7 11 ♘g3 ♗b7 12 0-0-0 a6 (aiming for ...c5 is often a good plan) 13 f4!? b4 14 ♘xh5 ♖xh5 15 ♘e2 c5! 16 ♘g3 ♖h7 ∓ Beliavsky-Chernin, Reggio Emilia 1995/6.

5...b5

5...♘bd7 6 ♘f3 ♕c7 *(D)* is an interesting system successfully tried out many times by McNab. White then has two main options:

W



a) 7 ♗d3 e5!? (7...b5 transposes to Line C2) 8 0-0 (8 0-0-0!? b5!? leads to wild complications: 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♗xb5! cxb5 11 ♘xb5 ♕c4 12 ♕a5 ♗b4 13 ♘xe5 ♕xe4 14 ♘c7+ ♔f8 15 ♗h6+ ♔g8 16 ♕b5! ♗f8 17 ♗xf8 ♖b8! with an unclear position, Grasso-May, corr. 1997; 8 h3 ♗g7 9 dxe5 ♘xe5 10 ♘xe5 dxe5 11 ♗c4?! 0-0 12 ♗c5 ♖d8 ∓ L.Cooper-McNab, British Ch (Dundee) 1993) 8...♗g7 9 dxe5 (9 ♗h6!? 0-0 10 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 =) 9...♘xe5 10 ♘xe5 dxe5 11 a4 (11 ♗c5 ♗e6) 11...♗e6 12 a5 0-0 13 ♘a4 ♘d7 14 b4 b5 = Waitzkin-McNab, London 1998.

b) 7 0-0-0!? is aggressive and might be the toughest test. The following pawn sacrifice seems almost forced: 7...b5 (7...e5 8 h3 ♗g7 9 ♗h6 ±) 8 e5

b4 9 ♘b5 cxb5 10 exf6 ♘xf6 11 ♗xb5+ ♗d7, and here:

b1) 12 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 (12...♘xd7!? 13 ♕xb4 ♖b8 transposes to 'b22') 13 ♕xb4 ♘d5 14 ♕a5 ♘xe3 15 fxe3 ♗h6 16 ♖d3 0-0 gave Black some compensation in Calzetta-Gual, Terrassa 1999.

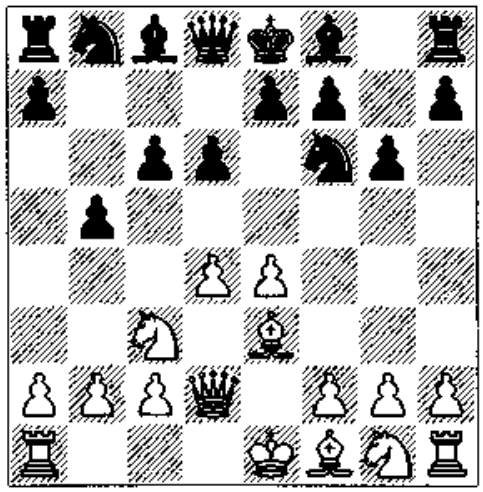
b2) 12 ♕xb4 and now:

b21) 12...♗g7?! 13 ♕c4 ♕b6 14 ♗xd7+ ♘xd7 15 ♖d3! 0-0 16 ♖b3 ♕a5 17 ♔b1 ± and Black's compensation proved insufficient in Nguyen-Yrjölä, Istanbul OL 2000.

b22) 12...♖b8 13 ♗xd7+ ♘xd7 14 ♕c3 ♕xc3 15 bxc3 ♘b6 16 ♔d2! ±.

b23) 12...♖c8!? 13 ♖d2 ♗g7 sees Black relying on pressure along the open lines in front of the white king.

We now return to the position after 5...b5 *(D)*:



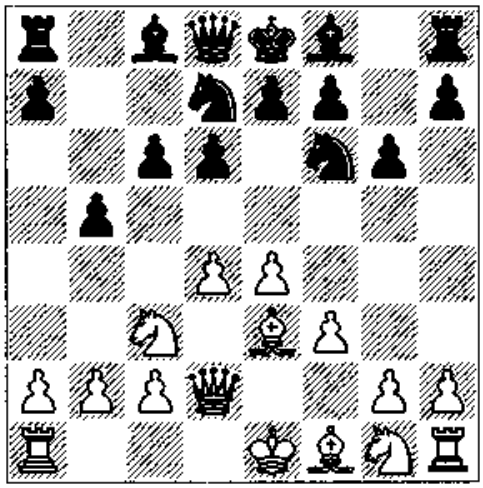
Now:

C1: 6 f3 192
C2: 6 ♗d3 194

C1)

6 f3 ♘bd7 *(D)*

7 g4



White has a range of other plans:

a) 7 0-0-0?! (having delayed playing ...♗g7, Black is quite well prepared to meet this) 7...♕a5 (there is nothing in particular wrong with the natural 7...b4!? 8 ♘ce2 a5 either) 8 ♔b1 and then:

a1) 8...♗a6!? 9 ♘xb5 (9 g4 b4 10 ♘ce2 ♘b6 11 b3 h5 12 gxh5 ♘xh5 13 ♗g2 ♗g7 14 f4 ♘f6 ∓ Enklaar-Timman, Dutch Ch 1976) 9...♕xd2 10 ♘c7+ ♔d8 11 ♖xd2 ♗xf1 12 ♘xa8 ♗a6 13 ♘h3 h6 is unclear.

a2) 8...b4 9 ♘ce2 ♗a6 =.

a3) 8...♘b6 9 ♘d5 ♕xd2 10 ♘xf6+ exf6 11 ♗xd2 d5 12 exd5 ♘xd5 13 ♘e2 ♗e6 = Marciani-Berebora, Croatian Cht 1996.

b) 7 h4 (to provoke a weakness on g5) 7...h5!? (this is not forced since 7...♘b6 8 g4 h5 9 g5 ♘fd7 transposes to the main line) 8 ♘h3 ♗g7 9 ♘g5 ♕a5 10 ♗e2 ♘b6 11 ♘d1 ♕xd2+ 12 ♗xd2 0-0 = McShane-Gufeld, London 1995.

c) 7 a4 (White starts action on the queenside) 7...b4 8 ♘d1 (8 ♘ce2?! a5 9 g4 ♘b6 10 b3 h5 11 g5 ♘fd7 12 f4

♗b7 13 ♗g2 c5 14 ♘h3 ♗g7 15 0-0 ♗a6! gives Black counterplay, Van der Wiel-M.Gurevich, Linares Z 1995) 8...a5 9 c3 (9 ♗d3 ♗g7 10 ♘e2 0-0 11 0-0 ♗a6!? =) 9...bxc3 (9...♖b8 is less logical, though 10 g4 e5 11 h4 h5 12 g5 ♘h7 13 ♘h3 ♗g7 14 f4 bxc3 15 bxc3 ♘b6 16 ♗d3 was unclear in Gligorić-Popchev, Belgrade 1996) 10 bxc3 h5!? 11 ♗d3 ♗a6 = (generally this exchange eases Black's life) 12 ♘e2 ♗g7 13 0-0 ♗xd3 14 ♕xd3 0-0 15 ♘f2 ♕c7 16 f4 e5 is unclear, Ki.Georgiev-Leuw, Katerini 1992.

d) A very positional plan is 7 ♘h3 ♗g7 8 ♘f2 0-0. Now:

d1) 9 a4!? b4 10 ♘cd1 a5 11 ♗e2 e5 12 c3 bxc3 13 bxc3 ♖e8 14 0-0 d5!? 15 dxe5 ♖xe5 (15...♘xe5?! Ki.Georgiev-Torre, Leningrad 1987) 16 ♗d4 ♖e6 =.

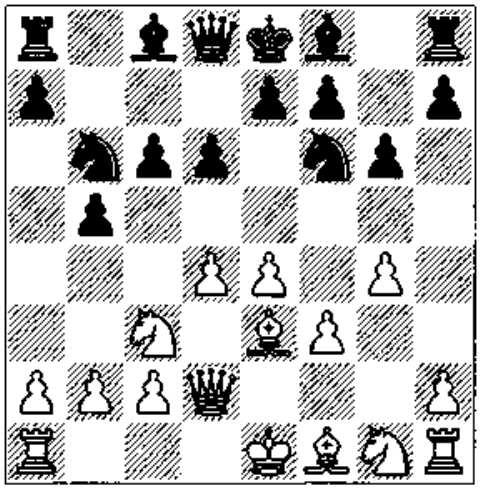
d2) 9 ♗e2 a5!? (another sensible plan is ...♗b7, ...a6 and ...c5) 10 0-0 ♕c7 11 ♖ac1 ♗a6 12 ♘b1 e5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 c4 b4 15 c5 ♗xe2 16 ♕xe2 ♘h5 17 ♖fd1 ♖fd8 18 ♘d2 ♘f4 = Granda-Rivas, Malaga 1991.

7...♘b6 *(D)*

This is very natural, as the knight heads for c4 and frees the d7-square for the other knight.

Black can also play 7...♕a5!? 8 g5 (8 ♗d3 ♘b6 9 ♘ge2 h5 10 g5 ♘fd7 11 ♘b1 ♕a6 12 ♕c3 ♘a4 13 ♕b3 ♖b8 is equal, Tiviakov-Gipslis, Podolsk 1992) 8...♘h5 9 ♘ge2 ♗g7 10 ♘g3 ♘xg3 11 hxg3 b4 12 ♘d1 c5 = 13 ♘f2 cxd4?! (13...♗a6) 14 ♗xd4 ♘e5 (Khezhumian-Arnold, Budapest 1998) 15 ♗e2 ±.

8 h4



The main alternatives are:

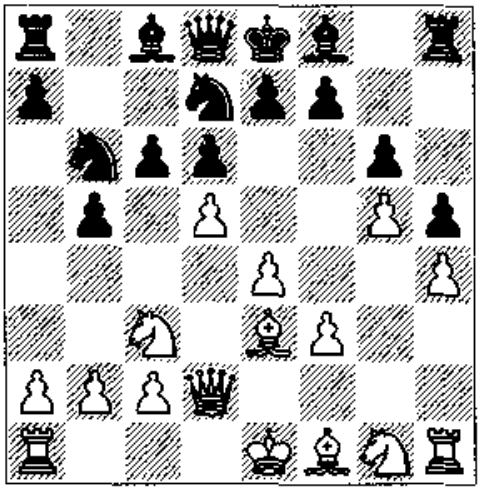
a) 8 g5 ♘h5 (8...♘fd7!? 9 h4 ♗g7 10 h5 ♖g8 11 f4 ♕c7 12 a4 b4 13 ♘d1 a5 14 ♘f2 c5 15 ♘f3 ♗b7 is also playable, Mateo-Marin, Andorra la Vella 1999) 9 b3 (9 ♗d3 e5 10 ♘ge2 ♗g7 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 a4 b4 13 ♘d1 a5 14 c3 b3 15 c4 ♗e6 16 ♕c3 0-0 17 ♕xb3 ♘d7 18 ♕c2 ♕e7 with compensation, Xie Jun-Torre, Shenzhen 1992) 9...e5? (according to Zakharevich, 9...♕c7 10 ♘ge2 e5 11 ♘g3 ♘f4 12 ♗xf4 exf4 13 ♕xf4 ♗g7 is much better, when Black's dark-square domination provides compensation) 10 a4 b4 11 ♘a2 c5 12 dxc5 dxc5 13 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 14 0-0-0+ ± Zabanov-Zakharevich, Kaluga 1995.

b) 8 b3 ♗b7 (Black has many playable alternatives, such as 8...h5 9 g5 ♘fd7, 8...a5!? and 8...♕c7 9 ♘ge2 h5 10 g5 ♘fd7 11 ♗g2 ♗g7 {½-½ Madl-Tella, Augsburg 2001} and now 12 f4 ♗b7, with the plan ...b4 and ...c5, is logical) 9 h4 h5 10 g5 ♘fd7 11 f4 ♗g7 12 f5!? 0-0 13 ♗h3?! (13 ♗g2 is superior though after 13...b4 14 ♘ce2 c5 Black is fine) 13...c5! ∓ Gažik-Chernin,

Budapest 1993. White's e4-pawn is a problem.

8...h5 9 g5 ♘fd7 10 d5!? *(D)*

The most critical move. After 10 f4 ♗g7 (10...b4!? 11 ♘d1 c5 is OK for Black, Mazi-Kogan, Bled 1998) 11 f5 b4 12 ♘d1 c5 13 c3 bxc3 14 bxc3 ♗b7 15 fxg6 fxg6 16 ♘f2 0-0 ∓ Black was better developed in Blatny-Plachetka, Czechoslovak Ch (Bratislava) 1991. 10 b3 should be compared with note 'b' to White's 8th move.


B

10...♘e5! 11 dxc6

11 ♗d4 leads to very murky play, but Black got the upper hand in Nijboer-Timman, Dutch Ch (Rotterdam) 1997: 11...♗g7 12 dxc6 ♘bc4 13 c7 ♕d7 14 ♕c1 0-0 15 ♘d5 ♗b7 16 ♗h3 ♕e8 17 f4 ♘d7 18 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 19 b3 ♘cb6 20 ♕b2+ ♔h7 ∓.

11...♘bc4 12 ♗xc4 ♘xc4 13 ♕d4 ♖g8!

Now:

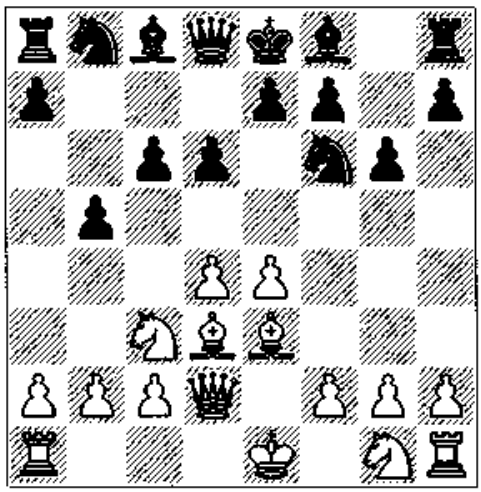
a) 14 ♘xb5?! ♕a5+ 15 ♘c3 ♗e6 16 b4?! (the b-file is insufficient compensation for the pawn and additional weaknesses; White should continue 16 ♗d2 ♗g7 17 ♕d3 ♘xb2 18 ♕b5, which is still unclear) 16...♕a3?! (according to Smirin, Black should accept the challenge with 16...♕xb4 17 ♖b1 ♕a5 18 ♗d2 ♗g7 19 ♕d3 ♘xd2 20 ♔xd2 d5!, when he continues 21 exd5(?) 0-0-0!! ∓, but 21 c7 is less clear) 17 ♗c1 ♕xb4 18 ♖b1 ♕a5 19 ♘ge2 ♗g7 20 ♕d3 ♕c5 21 ♘b5 ♖c8! 22 ♘bd4 ♗xd4 23 ♕xd4 ♕xc6 24 ♔f2 ♔f8 25 c3 ♖c7 26 ♗f4? ♖b7? (26...♗c8 ∓) 27 ♖b3 ½-½ Nijboer-Smirin, Pula Echt 1997.

b) The position remains complicated after 14 ♘ge2 ♗g7 (14...♕a5 and 14...♗a6 are the unclear alternatives mentioned by Smirin) 15 ♕d3 ♗a6 16 ♘d5! ♘xb2 17 ♕a3.

Conclusion: The systems with ♗e3, ♕d2 and f3 are quite popular, but Black doesn't seem to have any problems at all, at least from a theoretical viewpoint. However, there are many alternatives and different move-orders.

C2)

6 ♗d3 *(D)*


B

6...♘bd7 7 ♘f3 ♕c7!?

This useful move prevents e5 and avoids playing ...♗g7 prematurely. Instead:

a) 7...♗g7 8 ♗h6 0-0 9 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 10 e5 ± offers White some initiative.

b) 7...e5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 h3 is the theoretical main line; e.g., 9...♗b7 10 0-0 ♗g7 11 a4 a6 12 ♘e2 0-0 13 ♘g3 ♕e7 14 c4 b4 15 c5 a5 16 ♕c2 ± Palac-Ftačnik, Ljubljana 1998.

8 0-0

Or:

a) 8 h3 ♗g7 is hardly an improvement for White. Tischbierek-Hickl, Bundesliga 1995/6 continued 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♖fe1 ♗b7 11 ♗h6 e5 12 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 13 dxe5 ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 dxe5 15 a4 b4 16 ♘e2 c5 17 ♘g3 h6 =.

b) 8 ♗h6 admits that Black has won the tempo-fight! Still, things are not very clear after 8...b4 9 ♘e2 ♗xh6 10 ♕xh6 c5 11 dxc5 ♕xc5 12 0-0 ♗b7 13 ♘g3 e6! (the idea is to connect the rooks with ...♔e7) 14 a3 a5 (the unclear 14...bxa3!? 15 ♖xa3 ♔e7 was suggested by Pein) 15 ♘d2 (15 axb4!? may be more unpleasant) 15...♔e7 16 ♘b3 ♕b6, Gipslis-Gofshtein, Würzburg 1996.

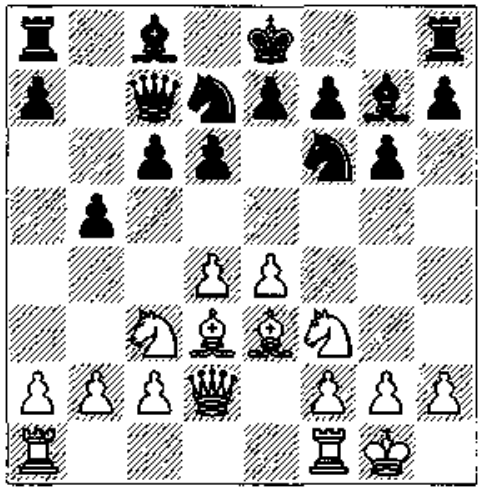
8...♗g7 *(D)*

8...♗b7 is logical but has not been tested in high-level games. There is a moment when Black has to start thinking about castling and the queenside is hardly the right place for the king.

9 a4

Or:

a) Less dangerous should be 9 h3 0-0 10 a4 b4 11 ♘e2 a5 (11...c5! is at least equal) 12 c3 ♖b8 13 ♘g3 c5 14



W

♗h6 ± Hjartarson-Karason, Reykjavik blindfold 1997.

b) Queenside action is typical in this line but this is also a logical moment to play 9 ♗h6, when after 9...0-0 White has a wide choice:

b1) 10 ♘e2 c5 11 c3 a6 (11...a5 12 ♘g3 b4 13 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♕g5 bxc3 15 bxc3 e6 16 e5 ♘g8! 17 exd6 ♕xd6 18 ♘e4 ♕e7 = Hodgson-Webster, British Ch (Millfield) 2000) 12 ♘g3 ♖e8 13 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♘h4 e5 15 d5 c4 16 ♗c2 ♘c5 17 ♕g5 ♘g8! = Fressinet-Tkachev, Bordeaux rpd 2000. The knight retreat seems to be a very standard defence in this line, which has a lot in common with the Breyer line of the Spanish.

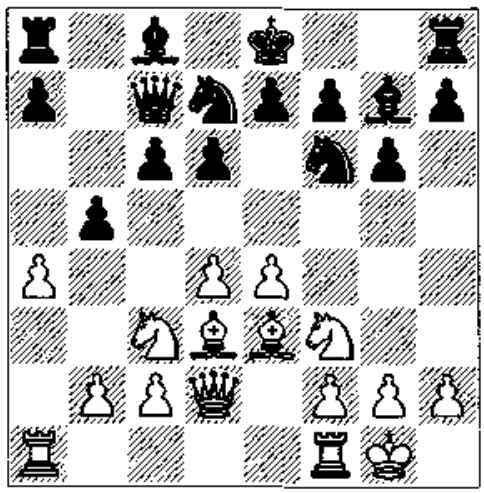
b2) 10 ♖fe1 e5 11 ♘e2 a6 12 ♘g3 c5 13 c3 ♗b7 14 ♖ad1 ♖fd8 15 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 16 ♕g5 ♘g8! = ½-½ Orlov-Schekachev, St Petersburg 1994. White's knight checks lead nowhere.

b3) 10 a4 b4 11 ♘e2 c5 12 c3 c4 13 ♗b1 b3 14 ♕g5?! e5 15 ♘g3 ♘e8 16 ♗xg7 ♘xg7 17 h4 ♘e6 18 ♕d2 ♘f6 ∓ Tissir-Tkachev, Shenyang 2000. This is an example of the buried bishop.

b4) 10 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 11 a4 (11 ♘e2!? c5 12 c3 a6 13 ♘g3 is similar to line 'b1'; 11 ♖fe1 is met by 11...e5 =) 11...b4 12 ♘e2 c5 13 ♘g3 (13 c3 c4!? 14 ♗b1 b3 15 ♘g3 ♘g8 16 h4 e5 buries the bishop on b1, which is rather committal for White, Belikov-Glianets, Russian Ch (Orel) 1992) 13...cxd4 14 ♘xd4 ♕b6 15 ♗b5 ♘c5 16 ♖fe1 ♘e6 17 ♘f3 ♕c5 18 ♗d3 (18 e5 dxe5 19 ♖xe5 ♕d6 =) 18...♘d4 19 ♘xd4 ♕xd4 20 b3 a5 = Pavasović-Gallagher, Pula Z 2000.

We now return to 9 a4 *(D)*:

B



9...b4 10 ♘e2 a5 11 c3 bxc3

Black has another way to defend: 11...♗a6 12 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 13 ♘g3 bxc3 14 bxc3 0-0 15 ♗h6 c5 16 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 17 ♕g5 e6 18 e5 ♘g8 19 ♖fe1 h6 20 ♕f4 cxd4 21 cxd4 dxe5 22 dxe5 ♖c6 with equality, Emms-Webster, British Ch (Scarborough) 1999.

12 bxc3 0-0 13 ♗h6 e5

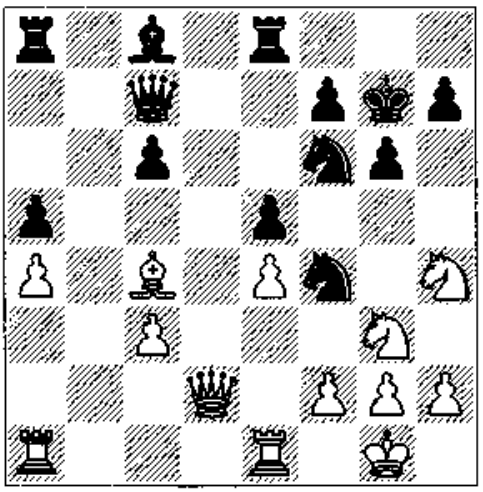
Black shouldn't risk 13...♗xh6 14 ♕xh6 ♗a6 15 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 16 ♘g5, when White gets an attack with the plan of f4 and e5.

14 ♘g3 ♖e8 15 ♖fe1 ♘f8 16 ♘h4?!

Black's position is defensible and this is obviously a hit into the air. The black knight occupies the strong square f4.

16...♘e6 17 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 18 dxe5 dxe5 19 ♗c4 ♘f4 *(D)*

W



Black is much better. Charbonneau-Zubov, Oropesa del Mar U-16 Wch 1999 did not last long: 20 ♘f3 ♗e6 21 ♗xe6 ♖ad8 22 ♕e3 ♖xe6 23 ♖ad1 ♘g4 24 ♕c1 ♘d3 25 ♕g5 ♘gxf2 26 ♖d2 f6 27 ♘h5+ ♔h8 28 ♘xf6 ♘xe1 29 ♘xe5 ♘h3+ 30 gxh3 ♖xe5 0-1.

Conclusion: This style of natural development is the modern option for White. It demands very accurate play from Black.

24 The Pirc with ♗g5 or ♗f4

In this chapter we discuss the aggressive plan starting with 4 ♗g5 followed by moves like ♕d2, f4 and often e5. Black has good defensive resources and chances for counterplay but some of the lines are extremely sharp. Usually Black can somehow benefit from the bishop's position. In our main recommended response Black erases it from the board and strives to use the dark squares. In Line A White puts the bishop on f4, which is a less natural square and hardly a real problem.

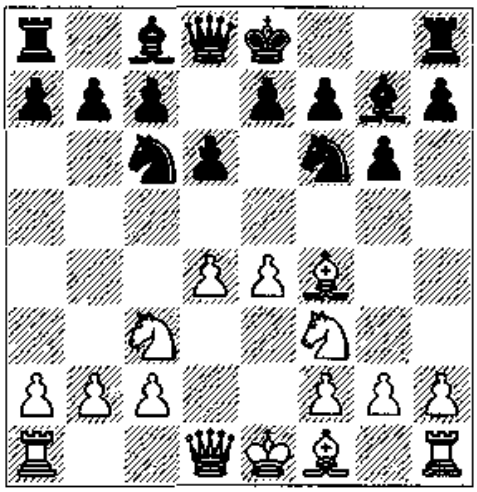
1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6

Now:

A: 4 ♗f4 197

B: 4 ♗g5 198

4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗f4 is more innocent than Line A but occurs a little more frequently. Black has some active responses, including 5...♘c6 *(D)*:

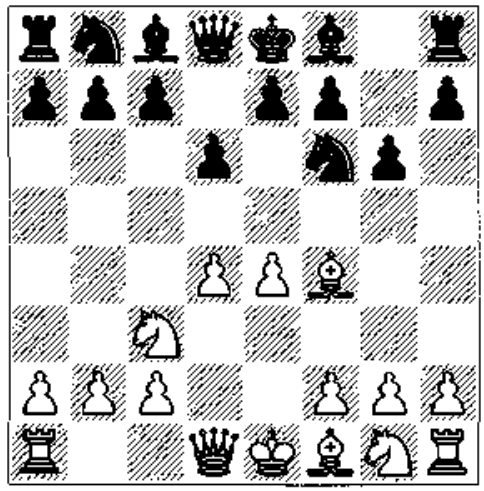


a) After 6 d5 e5! 7 dxe6 ♗xe6 Black equalizes straight away; for example, 8 ♕d2 0-0 9 0-0-0 ♗xa2!? (a more traditional approach is 9...a6 10 ♘g5 ♗g4 11 f3 ♗d7 12 g4 b5 13 ♔b1 ♖e8 14 h4 b4 15 ♘e2 ♘e5 16 ♘d4 h6 17 ♘h3 ♘xf3!? 18 ♘xf3 ♘xe4 19 ♕g2 ♕f6 with attacking chances, Grosar-Avrukh, Elista OL 1998) 10 ♗g5 (10 ♘xa2 ♘xe4 11 ♕e3 ♕f6 12 c3 ♘xf2 13 ♕xf2 ♕xf4+ with three pawns and a solid position as compensation) 10...♗e6 11 ♕f4 ♕e7 12 ♕h4 ♘e5 13 ♘xe5 dxe5 14 ♖d3 ½-½ Am.Rodriguez-Mowsziszian, Terrassa 1996 and now Mowsziszian gives as a possible continuation 14...h6 15 ♗xh6 ♗xh6+ 16 ♕xh6 c6 intending ...b5.

b) 6 ♕d2 ♗g4 7 d5 (Black has no problems after 7 ♗e2 ♗xf3 8 ♗xf3 e5 = or 7 0-0-0 ♗xf3 8 gxf3 e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♕xd8+ ♖xd8 11 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 12 ♗e3 ♘d4 =) 7...♗xf3 8 gxf3 ♘e5 9 ♗e2 c6 10 0-0-0 (10 dxc6 bxc6 11 0-0-0 ♕a5 ∓) 10...0-0 11 ♗h6 ♗xh6 12 ♕xh6 cxd5 13 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 14 ♖xd5 ♖c8 15 f4 ♕c7 16 c3 e6 17 ♖d4 ♘c6 18 ♖d2 f5 = Grosar-Smirin, Bratto 1997.

A)

4 ♗f4 *(D)*



This is not a very well known idea but it is not so easy to face. The potential problem compared with ♗e3 is that the bishop is on a more vulnerable square.

4...c6 5 ♕d2

5 h3 is sometimes a waste of time and after 5...♗g7 6 ♕d2 0-0 7 ♘f3 b5 8 ♗d3 ♘bd7 9 ♗h6 e5 10 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 11 0-0 (11 0-0-0 exd4 12 ♘xd4 ♕b6 13 ♘ce2 ♘c5 14 f3 a5 leads to a more lively position, but Black has nice counterplay) 11...♗b7 12 a4 a6 = Black was perfectly OK in Zubov-Rakhmangulov, Alushta 1999.

5...b5

5...♘bd7 6 ♘f3 ♕a5 is another interesting method but 5...♗g7 loses the tempo mentioned earlier if White replies 6 ♗h6.

6 ♗d3

Less active is 6 a3 ♘bd7 7 ♘f3 ♘b6 8 h3 ♗g7 9 ♗d3 0-0 10 0-0 a6 (preparing ...c5) 11 e5 dxe5 12 dxe5 ♘fd5 = Lutikov-Karasev, Rostov 1976.

6...♘bd7 7 ♘f3 ♘b6

7...♗g7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♖fe1?! (9 ♗h6 ♕c7 transposes to note 'b' to White's 9th move in Line C2 of Chapter 23) 9...♘b6 10 h3 b4 11 ♘e2 c5 12 dxc5 dxc5 13 e5 ♘fd5 gave Black good counterplay in Kamber-Piket, Lugano 1989.

Now (after 7...♘b6):

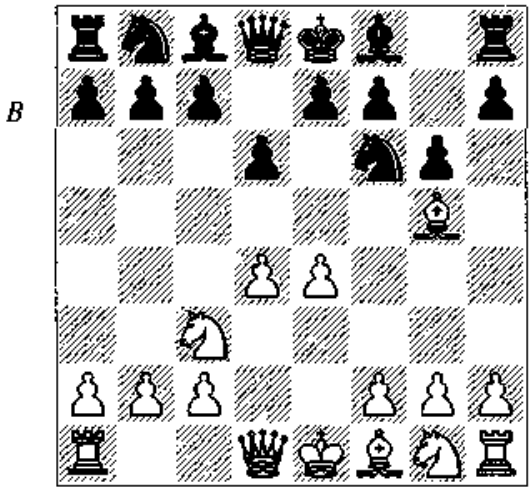
a) 8 0-0?! ♗g4 (now this move is unpleasant) 9 e5 ♘h5 10 exd6 ♗xf3 11 gxf3 ♘xf4 12 ♕xf4 ♕xd6 13 ♕xd6 exd6 ∓ G.Kuzmin-Conquest, London Lloyds Bank 1985.

b) It seems White should play 8 h3 ♗g7 9 ♗h6 0-0 10 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 11 0-0 ♕c7 12 a4 b4 13 ♘e2 a5 14 ♘g3 e5 (14...c5!? 15 e5 dxe5 16 dxe5 ♘g8 looks playable and more solid) 15 c3 bxc3 16 ♕xc3 ± Kuzmin-Ponomariov, Donetsk Z 1998.

Conclusion: 4 ♗f4 is theoretically not so dangerous as 4 ♗e3, although White has scored very well in practice.

B)

4 ♗g5 *(D)*

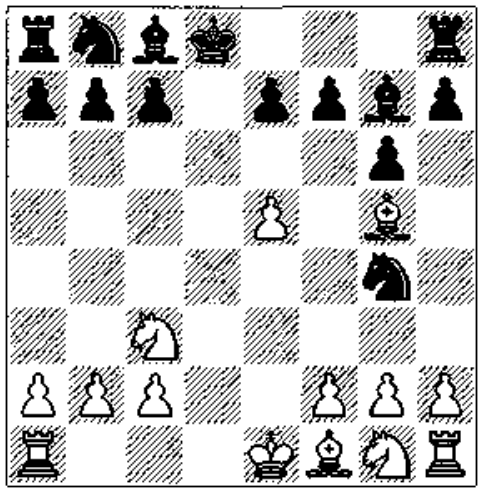


4...♗g7 5 ♕d2

Or:

a) 5 ♕e2!? is rare but might be more dangerous than it looks. The natural continuation is 5...0-0 6 0-0-0 c6 7 h4 b5, when 8 e5?! b4 9 exf6 exf6 is good for Black.

b) There are certainly players who hate the line 5 e5 dxe5 (after 5...♘fd7 6 exd6 cxd6 7 ♕d2 ± White usually gets some initiative) 6 dxe5 even if Black has excellent chances for equality in the ending after 6...♘g4 (not 6...♕xd1+? 7 ♖xd1 ♘g4 8 ♘d5 ♗xe5 9 ♘f3 ♗d6 10 ♗xe7, which is simply bad for Black) 7 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 *(D)*. Then:



b1) After the genuine pawn sacrifice 8 ♘f3 ♘xe5 (8...♗e6?! 9 ♗h4 ♘xe5 10 ♘g5 ♗d7 11 ♗g3 ♘bc6 12 ♗b5 gives White the initiative, Raaste-Parma, Nice OL 1974) 9 0-0-0+ ♗d7 10 ♘xe5 (10 ♘d5 ♘bc6 11 ♗b5 ♘xf3 12 gxf3 f6 13 ♘b4 fxg5 14 ♘xc6+ ♔e8 ∓) 10...♗xe5 11 ♗c4 ♗xc3!? (11...f6 12 ♗h6 ♔c8 13 ♘e4 ♗d6 14 ♖he1 ♘c6 15 ♗d5 = ♖e8 16 ♗f7 ♖d8 17 ♗d5, Mayr-Berelovich, Berlin 1994) 12 bxc3 f6 13 ♗h6 ♔c8 14 ♖he1 ♘c6 15 f4 ♖d8 Black has at least equality, Kolenbrander-Neuvonen, Netherlands 1991; for example, 16 ♗d5 a5 17 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 18 ♖xe7 ♗xg2.

b2) 8 ♖d1+ ♗d7 and then:

b21) White can try 9 ♘d5 ♘c6 10 ♗b5 (10 f4 h6 11 ♗h4 g5 gives Black counterplay, Haubt-Hort, Bundesliga 1980/1) 10...♘gxe5 11 f4 h6! 12 ♗h4 a6 (12...♘g4!? looks less clear) 13 ♗e2 g5 =.

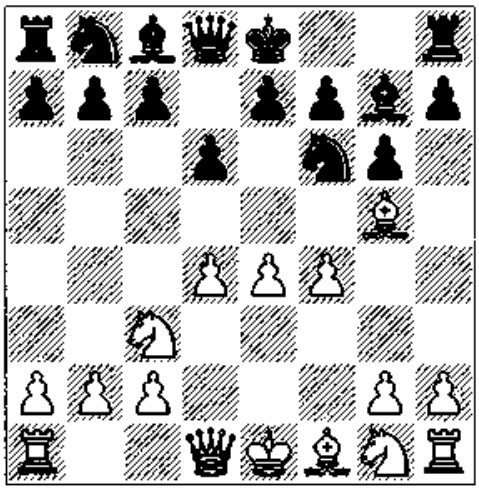
b22) 9 e6 fxe6 10 ♗c4 ♔e8 11 ♘f3 (the alternatives give Black counterplay: 11 ♘b5 ♘a6 12 ♘d4 ♘b4 13 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 14 ♗xe6 ♘xc2+ 15 ♔f1 ♘e5 ∓; 11 ♘ge2 ♘e5! 12 ♗b3 ♘a6 13 ♘e4 ♘f7) 11...♘c6 12 0-0 (or 12 ♘b5 ♖c8 13 ♘bd4 ♘xd4 14 ♘xd4 ♔f7 ∓ 15 h4?! ♘e5 16 ♗e2 c5 ∓ Schellhorn-Chandler, Hamburg 1980) 12...♘ge5 (after 12...a6!? 13 ♖fe1 ♘ge5 14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15 ♗b3 White has strong pressure on the central files as compensation) 13 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 14 ♘b5 (14 ♗b3 c5) 14...♖c8 15 ♖xd7! ♘xd7 (and not 15...♔xd7? 16 ♖d1+ ♔c6 17 ♘xa7+ +−) 16 ♗xe6 ♗e5 17 f4!? (worse are 17 ♖d1 ♖d8 18 f4 ♘c5 ∓ and 17 ♖e1 a6! ∓) 17...♗d6 18 ♗h6 ♖d8 (Black can consider 18...♔d8!?) 19 ♗g7 ♖f8 20 ♘xd6+ ½-½ Magem-Chernin, New York Open 1998. After 20...cxd6 21 ♗xf8 ♘xf8 22 ♗d5 ♖c8, intending ...e6, ...♖c7 and ...♔d8, an equal ending is very close.

c) White also has the aggressive 5 f4 *(D)*:

c1) After the immediate 5...c5, 6 e5 is quite unpleasant.

c2) 5...0-0 6 ♕d2 (6 ♘f3 c5 7 dxc5 ♕a5 8 ♗d3 ♕xc5 should be OK for

B



Black) 6...c5 7 dxc5 (7 e5 ♘g4 8 dxc5 dxe5 9 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 10 ♗xe7 ♖e8 11 ♗d6 exf4+ ∓) 7...dxc5 8 0-0-0 ♘c6 is not so bad for Black.

c3) 5...h6 6 ♗h4 c5 is the most critical and perhaps best. Then:

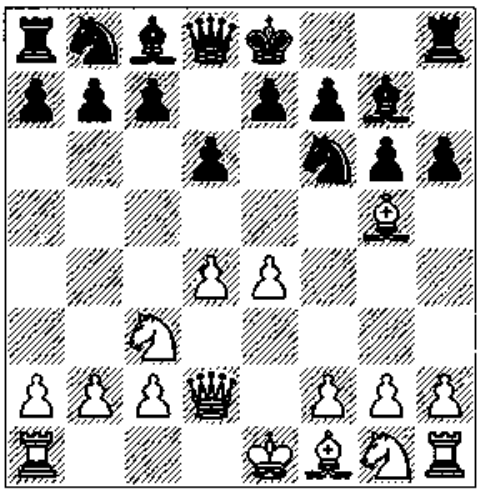
c31) 7 dxc5 ♕a5 leads to rather standard and comparatively positional Pirc play: 8 ♗d3 (a risky plan is 8 ♕d2 ♕xc5 9 h3 ♘bd7 10 ♘f3 0-0 11 0-0-0 a6 12 g4 b5 13 ♗d3 ♗b7 ∓ 14 g5 hxg5 15 ♗f2 ♕c7 16 ♘xg5 b4 17 ♘e2 ♘c5 18 ♘g3? b3 ∓ Kokkila-Yrjölä, Finnish Cht 2000) 8...♕xc5 9 ♕d2 0-0 10 ♘ge2 ♘bd7 11 h3 a6 12 a4 b6 13 ♗f2 ♕c7 14 0-0 ♗b7 = Schmittdiel-Gulko, Geneva 1997.

c32) 7 e5 leads to wild complications: 7...♘h5 8 dxc5 ♘xf4 9 exd6 g5 10 ♗f2 (equally messy is 10 ♗g3 0-0 11 ♗xf4 gxf4 12 ♕f3 ♘c6 13 0-0-0 e5 14 ♘ge2 ♗e6 15 g3 fxg3 16 ♕xg3 f5 17 ♖g1 ♕f6, Hall-Agrest, Harplinge 1998) 10...0-0 11 ♕d2 exd6 12 0-0-0 ♗g4 13 ♘f3 ♘c6 14 cxd6 (14 h4 dxc5 15 ♕e3 ♕f6 16 ♕xc5 ♘e6 is equal) and now Black's activity appears to compensate for the dangerous-looking d6-pawn: 14...♘e5!? (after 14...♖c8 15 h4, Sorokin-Jansa, Ostrava 1992, Nunn and McNab recommend 15...♕a5 16 ♔b1 with a complex position) 15 ♘d5 ♘xf3 16 gxf3 ♗xf3 17 ♘xf4 ♗xh1 18 ♘h5 ♗f3 19 ♘xg7 ♗xd1 20 ♕d4 (20 ♘f5!?) 20...♗g4 led to a murky position in Cranbourne-Molo, corr. 1994.

5...h6 *(D)*

The main line 5...0-0 6 f4 c6 7 ♘f3 b5 8 ♗d3 ♗g4 9 e5! has been unsuccessful for Black in practice. This is why we avoid it with the text-move, which has scored reasonably well.

W



6 ♗h4

Or:

a) The modest move 6 ♗e3?! allows 6...♘g4 7 ♗f4 e5 8 dxe5 ♘xe5 9 0-0-0 ♘bc6 10 ♘d5 (both 10 h3 ♗e6 11 ♗e3 ♘c4 12 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 13 ♘f3 = I.Zaitsev-Savon, USSR Ch (Erevan) 1962 and 10 ♘f3 ♗g4 11 ♗e2 ♕d7 12 ♘xe5 dxe5 13 ♕e3 ♕c8 14 ♗g3 ♗xe2 15 ♕xe2 0-0 = Sucher-Přibyl, Liechtenstein 1997 are comfortable for Black) 10...♗e6 11 h3 ♖b8! (a nice

idea: b2 is a target) 12 ♗e3 b5 13 f4 ♘c4 14 ♗xc4 bxc4 15 c3 0-0 16 ♘f3 f5 ∓ Lugovoi-Sakaev, St Petersburg 1995.

b) A more dangerous line for White is 6 ♗f4!? ♘bd7 (6...g5 7 ♗e3 ♘g4 is likely to come to the same thing after 8 0-0-0 ♘d7) 7 0-0-0 g5 8 ♗e3 (8 ♗g3 ♘h5 transposes to the main line) 8...♘g4 9 h4 ♘xe3 10 ♕xe3 (10 fxe3!? g4 11 h5 is a suggestion by Stohl; now Black could play 11...♘b6 to stop ♗c4) 10...g4 and then:

b1) Black got a powerful bishop after 11 h5 c5 12 ♘ge2 a6 (12...♕a5!? to continue ...b5) 13 dxc5 ♘xc5 14 ♘d4 ♕a5 (Stohl thinks 14...♗d7 15 ♗c4 ♖c8, with counterplay, is even better) 15 ♗c4 ♗d7 16 ♘d5 ♘a4 in J.Polgar-Smirin, Groningen PCA 1993.

b2) 11 f4!? is more dangerous:

b21) 11...gxf3?! 12 ♘xf3 c5 13 ♖h3?! (13 dxc5 ♘xc5 14 e5 is critical according to Yudasin because Black's position is ragged after 14...0-0 15 exd6 exd6 16 ♗c4 ±) 13...♕a5 14 ♔b1 a6 15 ♖g3 cxd4 16 ♘xd4 ♗e5 17 ♘d5, Sutovsky-Agrest, New York Open 1998, and now 17...♘f6 looks at least equal with the strong bishop on e5.

b22) 11...c5!? looks better. After 12 dxc5 (12 ♘ge2 ♕a5) 12...♘xc5 13 ♗b5+ (13 e5 0-0 ∓) 13...♗d7 14 e5 0-0 (or the unclear 14...♗xb5 15 ♘xb5 ♕b6) 15 ♗xd7 ♘xd7 16 exd6 exd6 17 ♘ge2 ♖e8 Black's piece activity and the strong g7-bishop compensate for his weaknesses.

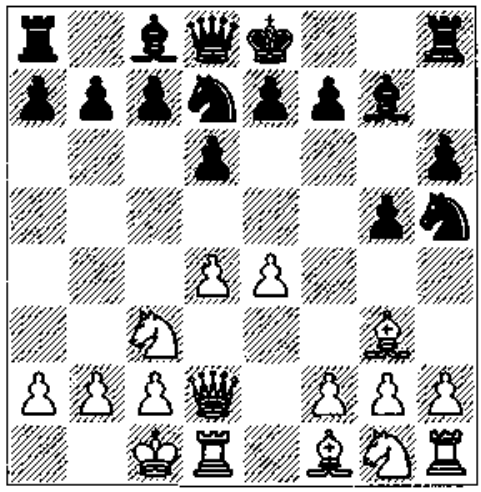
6...♘bd7

An alternative move-order for Black is 6...g5 7 ♗g3 ♘h5 8 0-0-0 (8 ♗c4 e6 9 ♘ge2 ♘d7!? followed by ...♘b6 and ...d5 should be OK for Black) 8...♘d7, transposing to the main line. This move-order avoids the next note.

7 0-0-0

7 f4 c5 8 d5 ♕a5 9 ♘f3 (9 a3 ♘h5 is unclear) 9...♕b4! 10 ♗d3 c4 11 ♗e2 ♕xb2 12 0-0 ♘g4 13 ♘d4 ♕b6 14 ♖fd1 and now, instead of 14...♘gf6 (Shabalov-Smirin, Philadelphia 1997), Black can try 14...g5 15 ♗xg4 gxh4 with a very unclear position.

7...g5 8 ♗g3 ♘h5 *(D)*



Now Black's most promising counterchances are usually based on the move ...c5 and the power of the dark-squared bishop.

9 ♘ge2

Or:

a) 9 f3 ♘xg3 10 hxg3 c5 11 dxc5 (11 ♘ge2 transposes to the main line) 11...♘xc5 12 ♗b5+ ♔f8 13 ♘ge2 a6 14 ♗c4 ½-½ Leko-Chernin, Hungarian Ch (Budapest) 1997.

b) 9 ♗c4 c5 (less active is 9...e6?! 10 ♘ge2 ♘b6 11 ♗b3 ♗d7) 10 ♘ge2 ♕a5 11 ♖hf1 (11 ♘d5 ♕xd2+ 12 ♖xd2

♖b8 ∓) 11...♘b6 12 ♗b5+ ♗d7 13 ♗xd7+ ♔xd7?! (13...♘xd7 looks solid enough) 14 ♕d3 ♖ac8 15 e5 gives White an initiative, Motylev-Marin, Bucharest Ciocaltea mem 2000.

c) The straightforward move 9 e5!? should be taken seriously: 9...dxe5 (Beliavsky prefers 9...♘b6) 10 dxe5 e6 11 ♗e2 (11 ♕e2!? ♘xg3 12 hxg3 ♕e7 13 f4 ♘b6 14 ♕f3! f5 15 exf6 ♕xf6 16 ♕h5+ looked unpleasant for Black in Motylev-Marin, Bucharest Ciocaltea mem 2001) 11...♘xg3 12 hxg3 ♕e7 13 f4 ♘b6 14 ♘f3 (14 a4!?; 14 ♘h3!?) 14...♗d7 15 ♘b5 ♗xb5 16 ♗xb5+ c6 17 ♗e2 ♖d8 = Z.Almasi-Beliavsky, Yugoslavia 1997.

9...c5 10 f3

In Beliavsky-Chernin, Portorož Vidmar mem 1997, the g7-bishop began to dominate the battlefield: 10 ♔b1 a6 11 dxc5 ♘xc5 12 h4 ♕b6 13 ♕e3 ♘xg3 14 ♘xg3 ♗e6 15 ♘f5 ♗xf5 16 exf5 ♘d7 17 ♕e1 (17 ♕xb6 ♘xb6 ∓) 17...♖c8 18 ♖h3 g4 19 ♖e3 ♔f8 ∓.

10...♘xg3 11 hxg3 a6

11...♕a5 12 ♔b1 ♘b6 is another logical method. Gwaze-Marin, Istanbul OL 2000 continued 13 ♘c1 cxd4 14 ♘b5 ♕xd2 15 ♖xd2 0-0 16 ♘xd4 d5 17 ♘f5 ♗xf5 18 exf5 e6 19 g4 ♖ac8 =.

12 f4 ♕a5 13 ♔b1 g4 14 ♘d5

Now:

a) 14...♕d8!? 15 ♘e3 ♘f6 and here:

a1) 16 ♘c3?! cxd4 17 ♕xd4 ♘h5 18 e5 ♘xg3 19 ♖g1 ♗e6 20 ♘e4 dxe5?! (20...♘f5 21 ♘xf5 ♗xf5 22 ♘g3 is better, though White has sufficient compensation) 21 ♕xd8+? (White should play 21 ♕b4 ♕c7 22 ♘xg3 exf4 23 ♘h5 ♗e5 24 ♘d5 ♗xd5 {or 24...0-0-0!?} 25 ♖xd5 ± according to Kaspi) 21...♖xd8 22 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 23 ♘xg3 exf4 24 ♘h5 ♗d4 −+ Tiviakov-D.Gurevich, Las Vegas FIDE 1999.

a2) 16 ♕d3 cxd4 17 ♘xd4 is a little better for White because of the f5-square.

b) The safer 14...♕xd2 15 ♖xd2 ♖a7 should be good enough for equality. The endings are generally quite good for Black in this line.

Conclusion: Some players might consider this line rather unpleasant for Black. While it is not clear White can get any advantage at all, the line with 5 e5 is somewhat irritating and some other lines like 5 f4 lead to extremely complex positions. In the main line, Black tends to gain counterplay on the dark squares. Against this system Black can exert much more pressure if he can adopt the Modern move-order. After 1 e4 d6 2 d4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 ♗g5 Black can comfortably play 4...a6, 4...c6 or even 4...♘d7.

25 Pirc: Miscellaneous Lines

Here we examine all other lines after 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6, which vary considerably in nature. C3 is the line with most practical importance. Many players consider the systems starting with 4 g3 as a good positional way to play for a win and it often works well when Black doesn't have a sufficiently concrete and active plan. There are a few such plans and here we focus on one.

4 ♗c4 (Line C2) and 4 ♗e2 intending h4 (Line C1) are quite aggressive systems which don't have totally sound reputations but especially in Line C2 there are some extremely messy variations and these lines can thus be dangerous if Black is unprepared.

3 ♗d3 (Line A) is a positional plan which is not particularly dangerous if Black is prepared. We take the most Pirc-style approach from several alternatives.

3 f3 (Line B) doesn't allow Black any Pirc-style options, so we adopt an approach (3...d5) which often leads to French-type play. Another Old Indian-style approach is discussed in Chapter 33.

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6

Now:

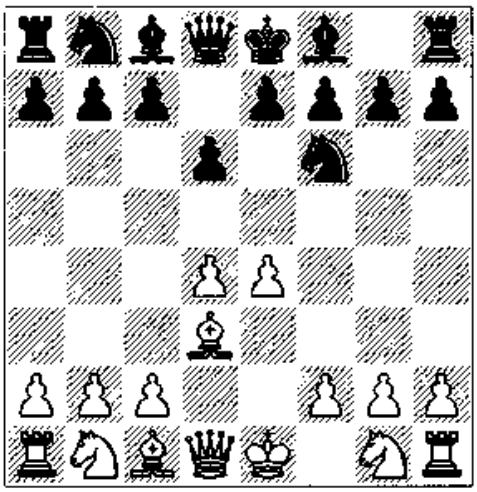
A: 3 ♗d3	203
B: 3 f3	207
C: 3 ♘c3	210

In Line C we deal with all lines for White after 3 ♘c3 g6 that have not already been discussed in earlier chapters.

A)

3 ♗d3 *(D)*

B



3...g6

Black has quite a reliable equalizer in 3...e5 4 c3 d5!?, which leads to positions akin to the Petroff Defence. However, a Pirc player may feel uncomfortable in these positions. The main line runs 5 dxe5 ♘xe4 6 ♘f3 ♘c6 7 ♘bd2 ♘c5 = 8 ♗b1 !? (8 ♗c2 ♗g4 9 0-0 ♗e7 10 ♖e1 ♕d7 11 b4 ♘e6 12 ♘b3 a5 13 b5 ♘cd8 14 a4 c5 is equal, Egiazarian-Marin, Bucharest 1998; 8 ♗b5!?) 8...♗g4 9 b4 ♘e6 10 ♕a4 ♗h5 11 0-0 (A.Fedorov-Khalifman,

Maikop tt 1998) and now 11...a6 is unclear according to Fedorov.

4 ♘f3

Or:

a) 4 ♘e2 (this move is more passive) 4...♗g7 5 c3 0-0 6 0-0 e5 7 f4 ♘c6 8 fxe5 dxe5 9 d5 ♘e7 10 ♗g5 ♘e8 11 c4 c5 12 ♘bc3 b6 13 ♕d2 f6= Tomczak-Rosenthal, 2nd Bundesliga 1997/8.

b) After 4 f4 Black tends to get counterplay against the pawn-centre: 4...c5!? 5 c3 (5 dxc5 ♕a5+) 5...♗g7 6 ♘f3 cxd4 7 cxd4 0-0 8 ♘c3 ♘c6 9 0-0 ♗g4 10 ♗e3 and now the most logical is 10...e5!? (also possible are 10...♗xf3 11 ♕xf3 e5 and 10...♕b6) 11 fxe5 dxe5 12 d5 ♘d4 13 ♗e2 ♗xf3 14 ♗xf3 ♘e8 15 ♘e2 ♘xf3+ 16 gxf3 ♘d6 = with a nice blockading knight, Müllner-McNab, corr. Wch 1990-5.

4...♗g7 5 0-0 0-0 6 c3

White can also attempt to do without this move: 6 ♖e1 ♘c6 7 d5 (7 h3 e5 8 c3 transposes to the main line) 7...♘b4 8 ♗f1 a5 (or 8...♗g4 9 ♘bd2 a5 =) 9 c4 ♗g4! 10 ♘bd2 c6 11 h3 ♗d7 12 a3 ♘a6 13 ♖b1 cxd5 14 cxd5 a4 15 b4 axb3 16 ♘xb3 ♗a4 is equal, Landa-Ehlvest, Beijing 1996. Black has a very comfortable position.

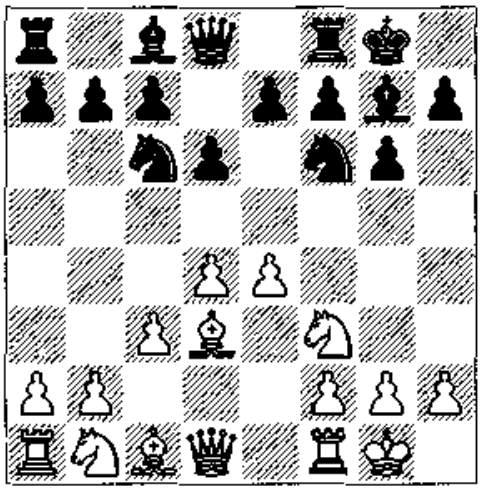
6...♘c6 *(D)*

The alternative 6...♘bd7, with the plan of ...e5, ...b6 and ...♗b7, is also quite solid.

7 ♖e1

Here White has plenty of other moves:

a) 7 ♘a3 e5 8 ♘c2 ♗g4 9 ♖e1 transposes to note 'b' to White's 8th move.



b) 7 h3 e5 8 ♖e1 transposes to the main line.

c) It is maybe too early to play 7 b4 ♗g4 8 h3?! (better is 8 ♘bd2 e5 9 d5 ♘e7 10 h3 ♗d7 11 c4 ♘h5 12 ♘b3 ♘f4 13 ♗c2 with an unclear position according to Leko) 8...♗xf3 9 ♕xf3 ♘d7 10 ♘d2 (10 b5?? ♘xd4 was a surprising blunder in Korchnoi-Azmaiparashvili, Amsterdam 1990) 10...e5 11 d5 ♘e7 12 ♕e2 c6 13 c4 cxd5 14 cxd5 ♘xd5! 15 exd5 e4 16 ♖b1 exd3 17 ♕xd3 ∓ Leko-Cu.Hansen, Copenhagen 1995.

d) 7 d5 ♘b8 leads to a different type of play. Now White can either stop ...♗g4 or continue his normal plans:

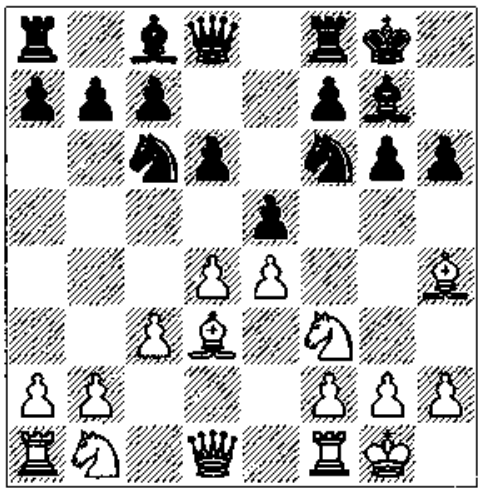
d1) 8 h3 c6 (8...e5 9 dxe6 ♗xe6 is possible) 9 c4 e6 (9...♘a6!?) 10 dxe6 ♗xe6 11 ♘c3, Korchnoi-Cu.Hansen, Biel IZ 1993, and now 11...♘a6 12 ♖e1 ♘c5 13 ♗f1 a5 is about level.

d2) 8 c4 and then:

d21) After 8...e5!?, 9 ♘c3 leads to some kind of King's Indian, while 9 dxe6 fxe6!? 10 e5 ♘h5! 11 exd6 cxd6 12 g3 ♘c6 was fine for Black in Leko-Smirin, Wijk aan Zee 1994.

d22) 8...♗g4 9 h3 (9 ♘bd2 ♘a6 10 h3 ♗d7 11 ♖e1 e5 12 dxe6 ♗xe6 13 ♘b3 ♘d7 = Landa-Schekachev, Jurmala 1991) 9...♗xf3 10 ♕xf3 ♘a6 11 ♘c3 ♘d7 12 ♗e2 (12 ♗d2 e6 13 ♖ae1 f5 is unclear, Cybulak-Schekachev, Moscow 1991) 12...♘ac5 13 ♗d2 a5 14 ♖abl e6 = Korchnoi-Sznapik, Lucerne OL 1982. In this line Black gets active knights and central play as compensation for the bishop-pair.

e) 7 ♗g5 is another important and logical continuation, with similarities to lines of the Torre. 7...h6 8 ♗h4 e5 *(D)* (8...♘h5!?, with the plan of ...♘f4, ...g5 and ...e5, is certainly worth considering but is also a riskier way to play for a win) and now:



e1) 9 ♘bd2 ♕e8 (with the idea of playing ...♘h5 without weaknesses but Black may also consider the more aggressive 9...g5!? 10 ♗g3 ♘h5 since 11 ♘xe5!? dxe5 12 ♕xh5 exd4 doesn't look unattractive for Black) 10 dxe5 ♘xe5 11 ♘xe5 dxe5 12 ♘c4 ♘h5 13 ♘e3 c6 14 ♗c4 ♔h7 = Todorović-Kosanski, Belgrade GMA 1988.

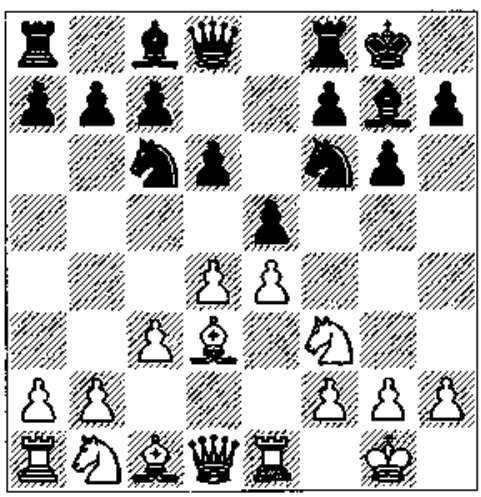
e2) 9 dxe5 ♘xe5 (of course 9...dxe5 can be played, but the text-move is very solid) 10 ♘xe5 dxe5 and now:

e21) 11 ♘a3 ♕e8 12 ♕b3 (White even has chances to get into trouble here: 12 f3?! ♘h5 13 ♗f2 ♕e7 14 g3 ♗h3 15 ♖e1 ♖fd8 ∓ Popchev-Azmaiparashvili, Albena 1986) 12...♘h5 13 ♖fd1 ♗f6 14 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 15 ♘c4 ♕e7 16 a4 ♗e6!? 17 a5 (17 ♕xb7!? may be possible) 17...♖ab8 18 ♕c2 ♘xe4 19 ♘xe5 ♘c5 = King-Burgess, British Ch (Blackpool) 1988.

e22) 11 a4 ♕e8 12 ♘a3 ♗e6 13 ♕c2 ♘h5 14 ♖fe1 ♗f6 15 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 16 a5 a6 17 ♕c1 ♔g7 18 ♕e3 ♕c6 19 ♘c2 ♘g4 20 ♕g3 ♕c5 = O.Rodriguez-McNab, Thessaloniki OL 1988.

e23) 11 ♕c2 ♗e6 12 ♘d2 (or 12 ♗e2!?) 12...♕e8 13 ♖fd1 ♘h5 14 ♗c4 ♘f4 15 f3 ♕c6 16 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 17 ♘f1 ♗f6 18 ♗f2 ½-½ Kharitonov-Korotylev, Moscow 1996.

7...e5 *(D)*



8 h3

After White's alternatives he tends to suffer due to the weakness of d4:

a) 8 ♘bd2 ♘h5! 9 ♘b3 ♗g4 (9...h6 10 ♗e3 ♕f6 is possible) 10 ♗e2 h6 (10...♘f4!? 11 ♗xf4 exf4 is unclear) 11 h3 ♗c8 12 ♗e3 ♘f4 13 ♗f1 g5!? 14 dxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 16 ♘d4 ♕f6! 17 ♘f3 ♗e6 18 ♘xe5 dxe5 19 ♕a4 ♔h8 gives Black typical kingside counterplay, Blodshtein-Belov, Voskresensk 1993.

b) 8 ♘a3 ♗g4 9 ♘c2 ♘h5 10 d5 ♘e7 11 c4 h6 12 ♘e3 ♗d7 13 g3 ♕e8 14 ♘h4 (after 14 c5?!, Bruzon-Becerra Rivero, Havana Capablanca mem 1999, Black should take the pawn: 14...dxc5! 15 ♕c2 b6 16 b4 f5 with counterplay) 14...f5 15 exf5 gxf5 16 ♘eg2 ±.

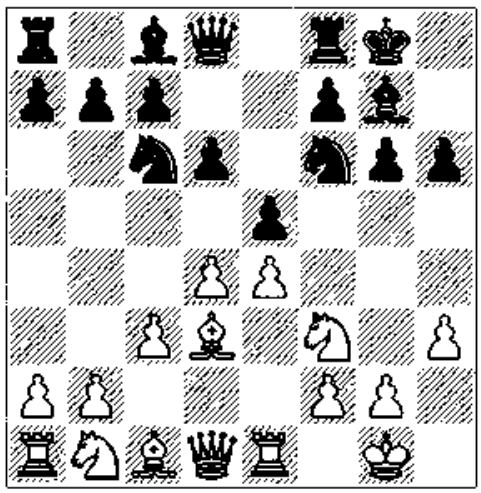
8...h6 *(D)*

Or:

a) The very natural 8...♘h5 9 ♗g5 tends to favour White.

b) 8...♗d7 is also quite playable, and usually transposes to the main line. In Kramnik-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1998 Black equalized easily after 9 ♘bd2 ♘h5 10 ♘b3 a5 11 a4 ♖e8.

W



9 ♘a3

Instead:

a) Opting for a King's Indian-type position with 9 d5?! is not very good here; for example, 9...♘e7 10 c4 ♘h7 11 ♘c3 f5 ∓.

b) 9 ♗e3 allows an interesting break in the centre: 9...d5!? (9...♘h5 10 ♘bd2 ♕f6 is a typical method) and now:

b1) 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♘xe4 12 ♘d2 ♗f5 13 ♕c2 (13 ♘xe4 dxe4 14 ♗c2 ♕h4 =) 13...♘xd2 14 ♗xd2 ♗xd3 15 ♕xd3 ♕e7 = de la Villa-San Segundo, Pamplona 1997/8.

b2) 10 exd5 exd4 11 ♗xh6 ♕xd5 12 ♗f4 ♗f5 13 c4 (13 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 14 ♗xc7 ♘d5 15 g4 ♕f6 16 ♗g3 dxc3 is unclear) 13...♕d7 14 ♗xf5 ♕xf5 15 ♗xc7 ♖ac8 16 ♗h2 ♖fd8 and the d-pawn represented good compensation in Svirin-Diachkov, Russian Cht (Podolsk) 1992.

9...a6

This is quite a logical moment to play 9...♖e8 since Black hardly has to worry about a closed King's Indian-type position after White has put the knight on a3; for example: 10 ♘c2 ♗d7 11 ♗d2 (11 b4?! allows 11...d5! 12 exd5 ♘xd5 13 dxe5 ♘xc3 with a slight advantage for Black) 11...a5! (it is important to get space on the queenside) 12 b3 ♘h5 13 ♕c1 g5 14 ♗f1 ♕f6 15 dxe5 dxe5 16 ♘e3 ♘f4 17 ♘d5 ♘xd5 18 exd5 ♘a7 and Black has counterplay with ...e4 or ..f5 and ...e4, Rublevsky-Krasenkow, Polanica Zdroj Rubinstein mem 1996.

10 ♘c2 ♖e8 11 ♗d2

White can hardly hope for anything more than a half-point with 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♘e3 ♗e6 13 ♕c2 (13 b3 ♘h5

14 ♗f1 ♕xd1 15 ♖xd1 ♖ad8 16 ♗b2 f5 17 exf5 gxf5 18 ♘h4 ♖xd1 19 ♖xd1 ♘e7 20 ♗a3 f4 with counterplay for Black, G.Kuzmin-Grigorov, Cappelle la Grande 1993) 13...♘d7 14 ♘g4 ♔h7 = Baimuratov-Tustanowski, Bratislava 1993.

11...♗d7 12 a4 a5

Now:

a) 13 ♘a3?! allows Black to equalize easily or even get more. 13...exd4 14 ♘xd4 (14 cxd4 ♘b4 15 ♗b1 d5!? { 15...♗c6 =} 16 e5 ♘e4 17 ♗xe4 dxe4 18 ♖xe4 ♗c6 with nice positional compensation) 14...d5 (here too the positional pawn sacrifice 14...♘xd4!? 15 cxd4 d5 16 e5 ♘e4 17 ♗xe4 dxe4 18 ♖xe4 ♗c6 ∓ is very good) 15 exd5 ♖xe1+ 16 ♕xe1 ♘xd4 17 cxd4 ♘xd5 18 ♘c4 ♗xd4 19 ♕e4 ♕f6 20 ♖f1 c6 (20...♗c6 ∓) 21 ♘xa5 ♖e8 22 ♕f3 ♕xf3 23 gxf3 ∓. Now, instead of the incorrect 23...♗xh3? (Magem-Tkachev, Las Vegas FIDE 1999), the accurate 23...b6 24 ♘c4 ♗xh3 keeps more of an advantage.

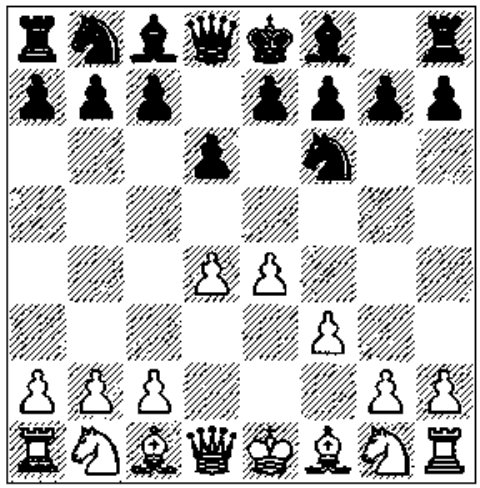
b) 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♗e3 ♗e6 15 ♘a3 ♕e7 16 ♕c2 is a recommendation by Gershon, offering White a minimal plus.

Conclusion: It seems this positional line doesn't offer White much. In many cases Black has more than one promising continuation at his disposal and he can even choose a good form of the Petroff Defence at move four.

B)

3 f3 *(D)*

B



3...d5!?

This move usually leads to a French type of position, although Black has good chances to avoid the theoretical French positions.

Black can choose between a variety of different set-ups. 3...c5 may lead to Sicilian (4 c3) or Benoni (4 d5) positions. In fact, after 4 c3 ♘c6 5 ♗e3 (5 dxc5 d5 =) 5...d5 6 e5 ♘d7 7 f4 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♘b6 9 ♘c3 ♗f5 we get similar position-types as in our main line here. 3...g6 may lead to the Sämisch Variation of the King's Indian. 3...e5!? is discussed in Line C of Chapter 33.

4 e5

Or:

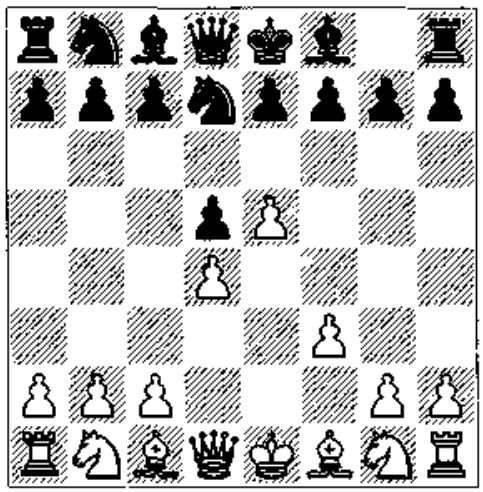
a) 4 exd5 is a Dlugy speciality, but it leads to positions akin to the Scandinavian Defence except that White's pawn is on f3, which should favour Black. 4...♘xd5 5 c4 ♘f6 (5...♘b6 6 ♘c3 g6 7 ♗e3 ♗g7 is also possible) 6 ♘c3 e6 (6...♗f5!?) 7 ♗e3 ♗b4 8 ♘ge2 0-0 9 a3 ♗e7 10 ♕c2 ♘bd7 11 0-0-0 c6 12 ♘f4 (½-½ Dlugy-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 1990) and now maybe 12...♕a5!? is Black's best move, since

the active 12...b5?! 13 cxb5 ♗b7 14 bxc6 ♗xc6 15 d5! ± cannot be recommended.

b) 4 ♘c3 dxe4 5 fxe4 (5 ♗g5) 5...e5! 6 dxe5 ♕xd1+ 7 ♔xd1 (7 ♘xd1 ♘xe4 leads to equality) 7...♘g4 8 ♘d5 ♔d7 9 ♔e1 c6 10 ♘c3 ♘xe5 11 ♘f3 ½-½ Cherepanov-Malinin, Arkhangelsk 1996. After 11...♗d6 Black is fine.

4...♘fd7 *(D)*

The very hypermodern 4...♘g8!? has been a speciality of Valeri Beim. However, some players may not like to play such a move.



5 f4

Or:

a) After 5 ♗d3?! c5 6 c3 ♘c6 7 ♘e2 e6 8 0-0 cxd4 9 cxd4 ♕b6 10 ♔h1 ♘xd4 11 ♘xd4 ♕xd4 12 ♘c3 a6 Black was a pawn up in Boissonet-Adams, Buenos Aires 1991.

b) 5 ♘c3 c5 6 ♗g5?! (6 ♘xd5 e6 7 ♘c3 cxd4 8 ♕xd4 ♘c6 9 ♕a4 ♘dxe5 =) looks suspect: 6...h6 7 ♗h4 g5 8 ♗g3 cxd4 9 ♘b5 e6 10 f4 ♕a5+ 11 ♔f2 ♘c6 12 ♘f3 ♘c5 (12...♕b6!?) 13 ♔g1 ♘e4 ∓ Timman-Hodgson, Amsterdam Donner mem 1996.

c) 5 c4 is an important alternative:

c1) 5...e6 6 cxd5 exd5 7 f4 (or 7 ♘c3!?) 7...c5 8 ♘f3 ♘c6 transposes to the main line and may be best.

c2) 5...dxc4 6 ♗xc4 e6 (6...♘b6 7 ♗b3 ♘c6 8 ♘e2 ♗f5 transposes to a line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted – *ECO* code D20) 7 f4 c5 8 dxc5!? (8 ♘f3 cxd4 9 0-0 ♘c6 10 a3 a5 11 ♘bd2 ♘c5 was fine for Black in the game L.B.Hansen-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 1993) 8...♗xc5 9 ♘f3 a6 10 ♘c3 b5 11 ♗d3 ♗b7 12 a3 ♘c6 13 ♘e4 0-0 (13...♖c8!?) 14 h4 ♗e7 15 ♗e3 f6 16 ♗c2 gave White the initiative in Kasparov-Cu.Hansen, Tåsinge (1) 1990, though things didn't look so clear around move 9.

5...c5 6 ♘f3

This is hardly a good moment for the aggressive 6 e6?! fxe6 7 ♗d3 g6 8 h4 ♗g7 9 h5 ♘c6 10 ♘f3 (10 hxg6 h6 is unclear) 10...♘xd4 11 ♘g5 c4 12 c3 ♘c5 13 ♗f1 ♘f5 14 hxg6 hxg6 15 ♖xh8+ ♗xh8 16 g4 ♘d6 ∓ Nepomniashay-Rashkovsky, St Petersburg 1994.

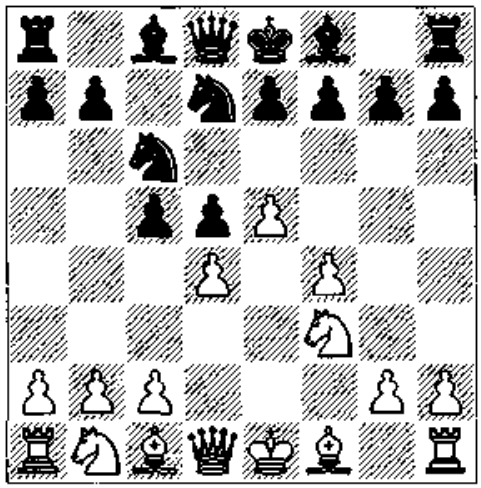
6...♘c6 *(D)*

7 c4

This is maybe too sharp. Alternatives:

a) 7 c3 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♘b6 should be OK for Black as he now gets his light-squared bishop out; for example, 9 ♘c3 (9 b3 ♗f5 10 ♗d3 ♗e4! 11 ♗b2 f5 12 0-0 e6 ∓ Kaspi-Gofshtein, Tel-Aviv Czerniak mem 1998) 9...♗f5 (9...♗g4 10 ♗e2 e6 is also logical) 10 ♗e2 e6 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 b3 0-0 13 ♗b2 f6 14 exf6 ♗xf6 15 ♘e5 ♘d7 with an

W



equal position, Hoeksema-Hodgson, Leeuwarden 1993.

b) The most critical move seems to be 7 ♗e3, when Black has two moves:

b1) 7...e6 8 ♘c3 transposes to a main line of the French Defence (*ECO* code C11). The main options are then 8...♕b6 9 ♘a4 ♕a5+ 10 c3, 8...a6 9 ♕d2 b5 and 8...cxd4 9 ♘xd4, when 9...♕b6 leads to sharp tactics, while 9...♗c5 10 ♕d2 is generally a little quieter. See a good book on the French for details.

b2) 7...cxd4 8 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 9 ♗xd4 ♘b8! (without this regrouping there is no point in Black's play) 10 ♘c3 ♘c6 and then:

b21) 11 ♗b5 e6 12 a3 (12 0-0 ♗d7 13 f5 ♕h4 is unclear – Gelfand) 12...♗d7 13 ♗xc6 ♗xc6? (according to Gelfand Black should play the surprising queen sacrifice 13...bxc6 14 ♘a4 ♕a5+ 15 c3 c5 16 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 17 b4 ♗xd4!! 18 bxa5 ♗xc3+ 19 ♔f2 0-0! 20 ♖c1 ♗xa5 with compensation due to White's vulnerable king and Black's active pieces) 14 0-0 g6 15 ♕d2 ± Gelfand-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 1994.

b22) 11 ♗f2 e6 12 ♗d3 transposes to a line of the French that is considered bad for Black. 12...d4?! 13 ♘e4 ♗b4+ 14 c3 dxc3 15 bxc3 ♗e7 16 0-0 ± was Sadler-Hodgson, Bundesliga 1998/9, while 12...g5 is risky in view of 13 ♕h5!? gxf4 14 0-0-0. Speelman suggested 12...b6.

7...e6 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♘c3

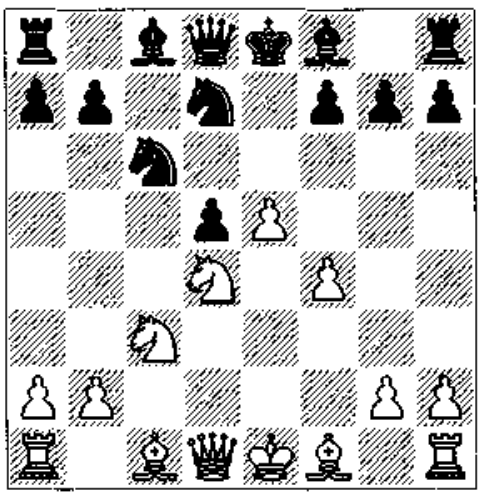
Or:

a) 9 ♗d3? cxd4 10 0-0 ♘c5 (to play ...♕b6 and ...♘b4) 11 a3 ♕b6 12 b4 ♘xd3 13 ♕xd3 g6! ∓ Sjödahl-Hodgson, Harplinge 1998.

b) 9 a3!? ♕b6 (9...cxd4?! 10 b4) 10 b4! cxb4 11 ♗e2, with compensation, is an untested recommendation by Seirawan. Black could play 11...♕c7 with ...♘b6 to follow.

9...cxd4 10 ♘xd4 *(D)*

B



10...♘dxe5!

This tactical strike is far better than 10...♘b6 11 ♗e3 ±.

11 ♗b5

11 ♘xc6 ♘xc6 12 ♕xd5 led to another Hodgson victory: 12...♗e6 13 ♕xd8+ ♖xd8 14 ♗b5 ♗c5 15 ♗d2

♗f2+ 16 ♔e2 0-0 17 ♗e3 ♗xe3 18 ♔xe3 ♖fe8 ∓ Lodhi-Hodgson, Dhaka 1993. Of course 11 fxe5? is not possible either in view of 11...♕h4+ 12 g3 ♕xd4 13 ♕xd4 ♘xd4 14 ♘xd5 ♗g4!.

11...♗d7! 12 ♘xd5 ♗c5 13 ♘b3 ♗g4! 14 ♕d2 ♕h4+ 15 ♔f1 0-0-0 16 ♘xc5 ♗e6 17 ♘xe6 fxe6 18 g3 ♕h3+ 19 ♕g2 ♕xg2+ 20 ♔xg2 ♖xd5

= Seirawan-Adams, Bermuda 1999.

After the tactical struggle the game was transformed to an ending where the activity of Black's pieces compensated for the advantage of the bishop-pair.

Conclusion: After 3 f3 there are no Pirc-style options but this French-style solution is quite interesting, the critical continuation being 7 ♗e3. If Black likes more peaceful play, maybe he should consider 3...e5.

C)

3 ♘c3 g6

Now:

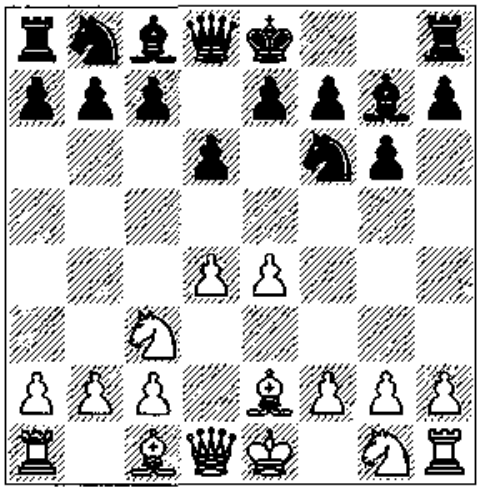
C1: 4 ♗e2	210
C2: 4 ♗c4	212
C3: 4 g3	215

In Line C1 we focus on White following up with 5 g4 or 5 h4.

The 'extended' fianchetto 4 h3 ♗g7 5 g4 0-0 6 ♗g2 is probably premature at this point because of the typical strike 6...c5! (6...e5 7 ♘ge2 ♘c6 8 ♗e3 is what White wants) 7 dxc5 (7 d5?! ♘a6 is not a very good form of Benoni and 7 ♘ge2 cxd4 8 ♘xd4 ♘c6 leads to a slightly suspicious form of Dragon) 7...dxc5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗e3 ♘a6 =, which is quite comfortable for Black. This is why players aiming for this system usually play 4 ♗e3 first.

C1)

4 ♗e2 ♗g7 *(D)*



5 h4

Instead, 5 ♘f3 is of course a Classical Pirc.

The other flank attack idea 5 g4 invites an active answer:

a) The Benoni-style 5...c5 6 g5 (6 d5 ♘a6 7 g5 ♘d7 comes to the same thing; 6 dxc5 ♕a5 should be fine for Black) 6...♘fd7 7 d5 ♘a6 (another plan is possible: 7...a6 8 a4 ♕a5 9 ♗d2 h6 10 gxh6 ♗xh6 11 ♗xh6 {11 f4 is unclear} 11...♖xh6 12 ♘f3 ♘f6 ∓ Tähkävuori-Lehtinen, Finnish Cht 1996) 8 h4 ♘c7 9 h5 (9 a4 a6 10 ♕d3 ♖b8 11 h5 b5 gives Black counterplay, M.Nielsen-Andreasen, Roskilde 1998) 9...b5 10 h6 ♗xc3+ 11 bxc3 0-0 12 f4 ♗b7 13 ♘f3 e6 14 dxe6 fxe6 15 ♕xd6 ♗xe4 gave Black counterplay in the game G.Portisch-Boronyak, Zalaegerszeg 1993.

b) The central strike 5...d5!? 6 e5 ♘e4 is another attractive idea against White's hazardous play; for example, 7 ♘xe4 (7 f3 ♘xc3 8 bxc3 h5 ∓; 7 f4!?) 7...dxe4 8 ♗e3 c5 9 c3 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♘c6 11 ♕d2 ♗e6 12 ♘h3 ♕d7 13 ♘f4! ♗xg4 14 e6 ♗xe6 15 d5 ♗xd5 16 ♘xd5 e6 17 ♘c3 ♕xd2+ 18 ♔xd2 0-0-0+ 19 ♔c2 f5 is unclear, Einarsson-Karason, Reykjavik 1998.

5...h5 *(D)*

This is the safest move.

a) 5...c5 6 dxc5 ♕a5, as recommended by Nunn and McNab, is a playable option.

b) 5...♘c6 is an interesting alternative, which is for some reason condemned by Nunn and McNab. Almost every line seem to lead to an unclear position with practical chances for both sides:

b1) 6 ♗e3?! e5 7 d5 ♘d4 8 ♗xd4 exd4 9 ♕xd4 0-0 10 ♕d2 ♖e8 11 f3 c6 with standard compensation.

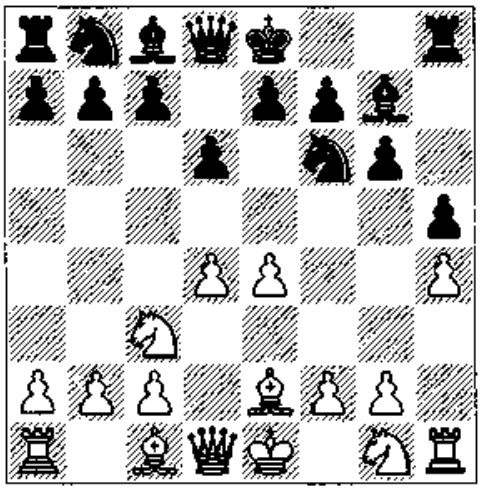
b2) 6 h5 gxh5 7 ♗b5 (7 ♗e3 ♘g4 8 ♖xh5 ♘xe3 9 fxe3 e6 10 ♕d2 ♗d7 11 0-0-0 ♕e7 12 ♘f3 0-0-0 =; 7 ♘h3 e5 8 dxe5 ♘xe5 is unclear, as is 7 ♗g5 h6 8 ♗h4 ♗g4 9 f3 ♗d7) 7...♗d7 (7...a6!? 8 ♗xc6+ bxc6 9 ♘ge2 ♖b8) 8 ♘ge2 a6 9 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 10 ♘g3 b5 11 ♗g5.

6 ♘h3

It is logical to play the knight to g5. White has two main alternatives:

a) 6 ♘f3 ♗g4 7 ♘g5 (7 ♗e3 ♘c6) 7...♗xe2 8 ♕xe2 ♘c6 and then:

a1) 9 e5!? ♘h7 10 ♘f3 dxe5 11 dxe5 ♘f8 (or 11...♕d7 12 0-0 0-0-0) 12 0-0 ♕d7 13 ♖d1 ♕g4 = Vratonjić-Vadasz, Budapest 1990.



a2) 9 ♗e3 ♘g4 10 0-0-0 e5 11 dxe5 ♘xe3 12 ♕xe3 ♘xe5 = Nadezhdin-Nalesny, Russia Cup (Novgorod) 1997.

b) 6 ♗g5 c6 7 ♕d2 (after 7 a4 Black has the plan 7...a5 8 ♕d2 ♘a6 with ...♘b4 to follow) 7...b5 and here:

b1) 8 ♗f3!? e5 (8...♗b7 9 0-0-0 ♘bd7 = might be preferable) 9 ♘ge2 ♕c7 10 0-0 0-0 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♖fd1 ♗e6 13 ♕d6 with a slight advantage for White, Donev-Mittelberger, Vorarlberg Ch 1995.

b2) 8 a3 ♘bd7 (Black can opt for the standard plan of ...a6, ...♗b7, ...♕c7 and ...c5, starting with 8...a6) 9 f4 ♘b6 10 e5 ♘g4 11 d5?! (White's plan is too aggressive) 11...dxe5 12 fxe5 ♘xe5 13 dxc6 ♕xd2+ 14 ♗xd2 a6 15 0-0-0 ♘xc6 ∓ Potterat-Iordachescu, Odorheiu 1993.

6...♘c6

6...♗xh3 7 ♖xh3 0-0 is also possible.

7 ♘g5 0-0 8 ♗e3 e5 *(D)*

9 d5

White's plan to castle queenside by 9 dxe5 ♘xe5 10 ♕d2 (10 f3 c6 11 a4

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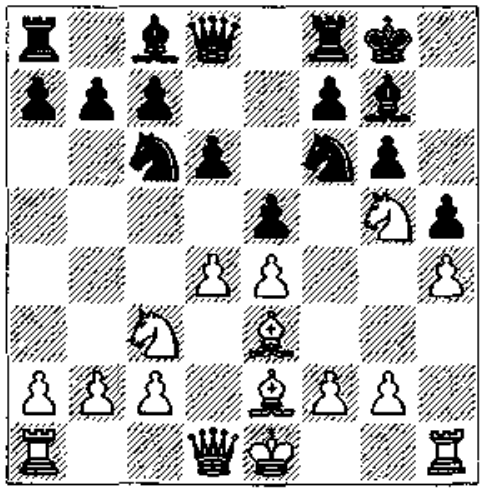

allows Black to equalize with the effective central break 11...d5 12 0-0 dxe4 13 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 14 ♘gxe4 ♘e8 = Meštrović-Praznik, Bled 1995) 10...♗d7 11 0-0-0 b5! 12 f3 b4 13 ♘d5 a5 14 ♗d4 ♘xd5 15 exd5 a4 16 f4 b3 17 cxb3 axb3 18 a3 ♘g4 gave Black plenty of play in Kobaliya-V.Fedorov, Russia Cup (Moscow) 1996.

9...♘d4!

This kind of pawn sacrifice is a very important weapon in Black's arsenal, especially in this line.

10 ♗xd4 exd4 11 ♕xd4 c6!

Black has at least adequate compensation because of his domination of the dark squares.

12 dxc6

12 ♕d2 cxd5 13 exd5 ♗f5 14 0-0 ♖c8 15 ♗d3 ♗xd3 16 ♕xd3 ♘g4 17 ♖ael ♕b6 and Black won easily in Kiik-Mäki, Helsinki 1993 – a nice example.

12...bxc6 13 0-0 ♘d5 14 ♕c4 ♘f4! 15 ♕xc6!? ♗xc3 16 ♗f3

16 ♗c4!?

16...♗xb2 17 ♕xa8 ♗xa1 18 ♖xa1 ♕b6

∓ Wade-Smyslov, Havana Capablanca mem 1965. White had to give up his queen after 19 e5 d5 20 g3 ♗g4.

Conclusion: Black has enough counterplay against these flank attack ideas. Against 5 h4, 5...h5 is a safe answer while 5...♘c6 is a more obscure one.

C2)

4 ♗c4 ♗g7 *(D)*

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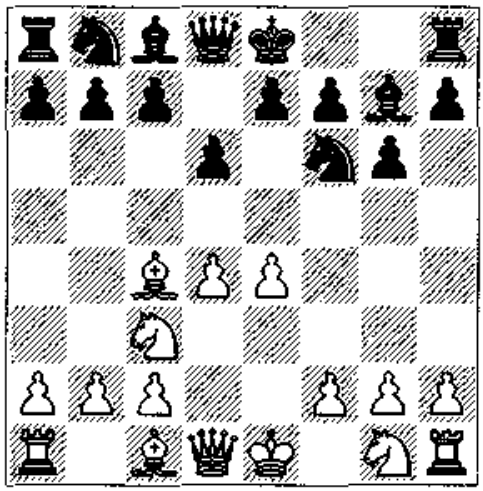


5 ♘f3

A very sharp variation starts with 5 ♕e2 ♘c6:

a) 6 ♘f3 ♗g4 and then:

a1) 7 ♗e3 is not too critical: 7...0-0 8 ♗.b3 (8 0-0-0 ♘xe4 9 ♘xe4 d5 10 ♗d3 dxe4 11 ♗xe4 ♕d6 = Beyer-Buchal, Bundesliga 1994/5) 8...e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♗c5 ♘d4 11 ♕e3 ♗xf3 12 gxf3 ♘d7! 13 ♗xf8 ♕xf8 14 ♘e2 ♗h6 with excellent compensation for Black.

a2) 7 e5!? ♗xf3 8 gxf3 (8 ♕xf3?! ♘xd4) 8...♘xd4 9 exf6 ♘xe2 10 fxg7 ♖g8 leads to a type of position that is

very hard to assess. Black has a material advantage but three pieces can easily beat the queen if Black weakens his pawn-structure. 11 ♔xe2!? (11 ♗xe2 ♖xg7 12 ♗e3 c6 13 0-0-0 ♕a5 14 f4 0-0-0 is equally unclear, Rocha Jorge-Silva, Brazil 1997) 11...♖xg7 12 h4 h5 13 ♗h6 ♖h7 14 ♗g5 c6 15 ♖he1 d5 16 ♗d3 ♕d7?! (16...♕d6 17 ♔f1 e6 is less weakening) 17 ♔f1 f5? 18 ♖e5 ± Zelčić-Z.Horvath, Pula 1996.

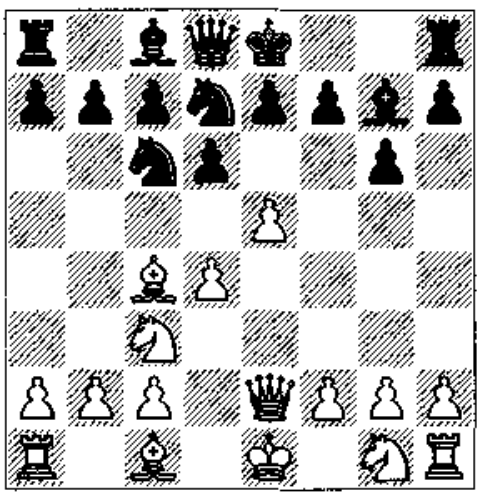
b) 6 e5 and now:

b1) 6...♘xd4 7 exf6 ♘xe2 8 fxg7 ♖g8 9 ♘gxe2 leads to obscure play.

b2) 6...♘g4 7 e6 is very sharp, although after 7...♘xd4 (7...f5 8 d5 ♘a5 is unclear) 8 ♕xg4 ♘xc2+ 9 ♔f1 (9 ♔d1!?) 9...♘xa1 10 exf7+ ♔f8 11 ♕h4 d5! 12 ♗xd5 c6 the position is very good for Black according to Nunn and McNab.

b3) 6...♘d7 *(D)* is safer:

W



Now the tactical attempts are suspect:

b31) 7 e6? fxe6 8 ♕xe6 ♘de5 –+.

b32) 7 ♗xf7+?! ♔xf7 8 e6+ ♔g8 (8...♔e8 9 exd7+ ♗xd7 ∓ may be even better) 9 exd7 ♗xd7 10 ♘f3 h6 11 ♗e3 ♗g4!? (11...♔h7 12 0-0-0 e5 is playable) 12 h3 ♗xf3 13 ♕xf3 ♔h7 = Norqvist-Andersson, Osterskar 1994.

b33) Therefore White should settle for 7 ♘f3 ♘b6:

b331) 8 ♗b5!? 0-0 9 ♗xc6 (9 ♗f4 dxe5 10 dxe5 ♘d4 =) 9...bxc6 10 0-0 ♗g4 11 ♖e1 (11 h3 ♗xf3 12 ♕xf3 dxe5 13 dxe5 ♕d7 14 ♖e1 ♕e6 ∓ Eiber-Koch, Finkenstein 1993) 11...f6 12 e6 (12 exd6 exd6 13 h3 ♗f5 14 ♗f4 ♖e8 ∓) 12...f5 13 h3 ♗h5 14 ♕d3 h6?! 15 ♘h2 g5 16 f4 g4 ± Herbrechtsmeier-Ol.Schmidt, 2nd Bundesliga 1996/7 may be somewhat nasty though one game doesn't prove much.

b332) 8 ♗b3 0-0 and now:

b3321) 9 e6 is too straightforward: 9...fxe6 10 ♗xe6+ ♗xe6 11 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 12 ♘g5 ♘xd4 13 ♕h3 h6 ∓ Holzer-Zimmerman, Oberwart 1998.

b3322) 9 h3 ♘a5 10 0-0 transposes to a line of the Alekhine that is acceptable for Black: 10...h6!? (10...♘xb3 11 axb3 ♗f5 12 ♗f4 is considered good for White; e.g., 12...f6 13 exd6 exd6 14 d5! ± Kapengut-Barkovsky, Minsk 1984) 11 ♘e4 ♘xb3 12 axb3 f6 (12...f5) 13 c4 fxe5 14 dxe5 ♘d7 led to an odd and rather messy position, in the game Kveinys-Speelman, Moscow OL 1994.

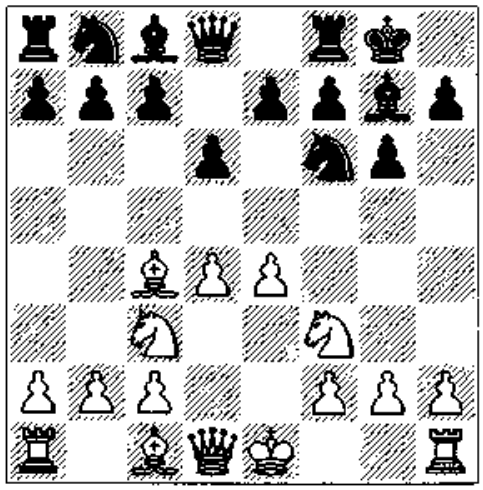
5...0-0 *(D)*

6 ♕e2

The natural 6 0-0 is tame because of the standard trick 6...♘xe4!:

a) 7 ♘xe4 d5 8 ♗d3 (8 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 9 ♘c3 ♕d8 10 h3 ♘c6 11 ♗e3 ♗f5 =) 8...dxe4 9 ♗xe4 ♘d7 10 c3 c5 = ·

W



b) 7 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 8 ♘xe4 h6 9 ♕d3!? (the classic exchange sacrifice 9 h3 ♕f8 10 ♖e1 ♘c6 11 d5 ♖xf3 12 gxf3 ♘d4 13 ♔g2 g5 14 c3 ♘f5 gave Black excellent compensation in the game Honfi-Adorjan, Hungarian Ch 1974) 9...♗f5 10 ♕e3 ♘c6 11 c3 (11 ♖e1 ♘b4!) 11...e5 12 dxe5 ♘xe5 13 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 14 ♘g3 ♗g7 15 ♘xf5 ♖xf5 = Anastasian-Ehlvest, New York Open 1998. Black has no problems at all.

6...c6 7 e5

Other moves are not dangerous for Black, especially if White allows ...d5:

a) 7 a4?! d5 8 ♗b3 ♗g4! 9 e5 ♘fd7 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 gxf3 e6 12 f4 c5 ∓ Kovačević-Nikolac, Croatian Ch (Pula) 1998.

b) 7 ♗b3 ♗g4 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♕xf3 ♘bd7 10 ♗e3 e6! (with the idea of blocking the b3-bishop) 11 a4 d5 12 exd5 ♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 exd5 14 a5 (14 0-0 a5) 14...b5 15 axb6 axb6 16 0-0 b5 = Skripchenko-Av.Bykhovsky, Tel-Aviv Czerniak mem 1998.

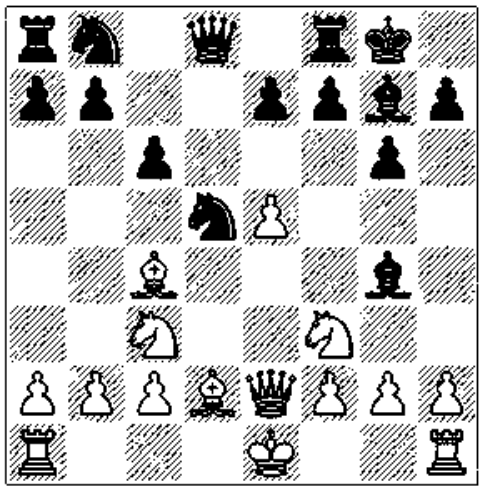
c) 7 0-0 d5 8 ♗b3 ♗g4 9 e5 ♘fd7 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 ♕xf3 e6 12 ♘d1?! c5 13 c3 ♘c6 14 ♗e3 cxd4 15 cxd4 f6 ∓ Jurković-Vismara, Cannes 1997.

7...dxe5

7...♘d5 tends to transpose to the main line after 8 ♗d2 (8 h3!? ♘xc3 9 bxc3 c5 is unclear) 8...dxe5 9 dxe5.

8 dxe5 ♘d5 9 ♗d2 ♗g4 *(D)*

W



10 0-0-0

An important alternative is 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 gxf3 (11 ♕xf3 e6 12 ♕e2 ♘d7 13 f4 ♕h4+ 14 ♕f2 ♕xf2+ 15 ♔xf2 f6! 16 exf6 ♗xf6 17 ♖ae1 b5 18 ♗b3 ♘c5 19 g3 a5 ∓ didn't work well for White in Sermek-Nogueiras, Moscow OL 1994) 11...e6 12 f4 (12 0-0-0 transposes to the main line) 12...♘d7 13 h4 ♘xc3 14 ♗xc3 ♘b6 15 ♗b3 (15 ♗d3 ♘a4!) 15...h5 16 ♗d2 a5! 17 a3 ♘d5 (17...a4!? 18 ♗a2 ♘d5 19 0-0-0 b5 also looks positionally nice) 18 c4 ♘e7 19 0-0-0 ♘f5 20 ♗c3 and now, instead of 20...♕e7 = Rublevsky-Khalifman, Russian Cht (St Petersburg) 1999, Black could even fight for the advantage with the more ambitious line 20...♕b6!? 21 ♗c2 ♖fd8 22 ♗xf5 exf5 23 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 24 ♕e3 ♕b3! ∓.

10...e6 11 h3 ♗xf3 12 gxf3 ♘d7 13 f4 ♕h4!

This is even stronger than the neutral 13...♘7b6.

14 ♕g4

Because even White's alternatives haven't worked well, it seems Black's blockading strategy is getting its rewards. Both 14 ♘xd5 cxd5 15 ♗b5 ♘b6 16 ♖dg1 ♖fc8 17 ♖g2?! ♘c4 18 ♕g4 ♕e7 ∓ Adam-Freisler, Prague 1986 and 14 ♗xd5 cxd5 15 ♖dg1 a6 16 ♖g4 ♕e7 17 h4 h5 18 ♖g2 ♖fc8 19 ♕d1 ♖c4 20 ♘e2 ♖ac8 21 ♔b1 d4 ∓ Brumen-Mohr, Ljubljana 1998 are excellent for Black.

14...♕xf2 15 ♗xd5 cxd5 16 ♘xd5 h5 17 ♘e7+

The knight gets into trouble after 17 ♕g1 ♕xg1 18 ♘e7+ ♔h7 19 ♖hxg1 ♖fe8 20 ♗b4 ♘b8 ∓.

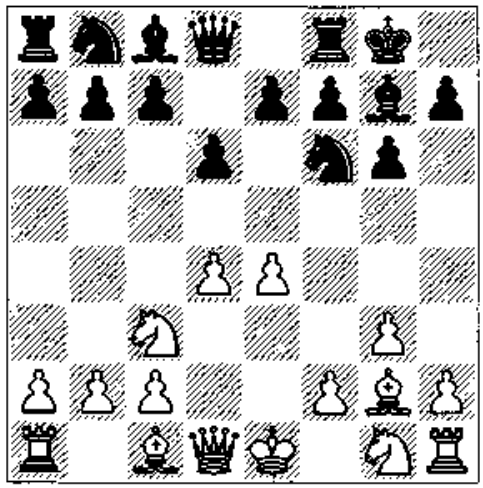
17...♔h7 18 f5 exf5 19 ♕b4 ♘xe5

∓ Sosna-M.Přibyl, Czech Cht 1997/8.

Conclusion: There are some quite obscure sublines but the main line, which is the most common in practice, seems to be fine for Black.

C3)

4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 0-0 *(D)*



6 ♘ge2

6 ♘f3 is not very logical. The simplest answer is 6...♗g4 7 ♗e3 (7 0-0 ♘c6 8 ♗e3 e5 9 d5 ♘e7 10 ♕d2 b5!? gives Black counterplay, Garcia Cano-Marin, Badalona 1997) 7...♘c6 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♕xf3 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 0-0 ♘d4 12 ♕d1 ♕e7 (or 12...c6 13 ♘e2 ♘e6 with equality, Pachow-I.Belov, Katowice 1993) 13 ♘b1?! (13 ♗xd4 ♖ad8 14 ♘d5 =) 13...h5! 14 ♘d2 h4 with good play for Black, Spassky-Timman, Tilburg 1978.

6...e5 7 h3

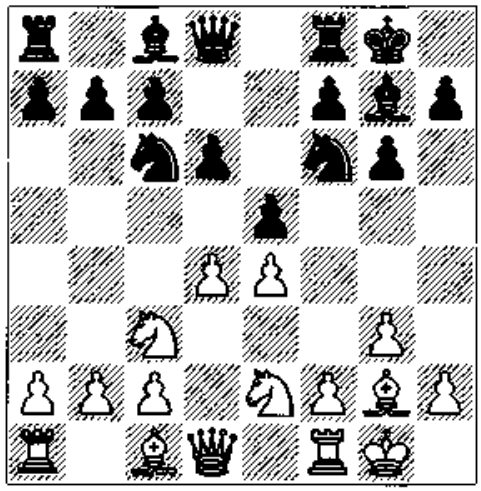
Or:

a) Naturally, the simplifying 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 9 ♗g5 c6 10 0-0 ♖e8 11 ♖ad1 ♘bd7 12 ♗h3 ♘c5 13 ♗xc8 ♖axc8 = Bykhovsky-Ponomariov, Torshavn 2000 is very easy for Black.

b) Generally 7 0-0 has not been considered very dangerous because after 7...♘c6 *(D)* White cannot play ♗e3, so his options are:

b1) 8 h3 exd4 9 ♘xd4 ♘xe4 10 ♘xc6 ♘xc3 11 ♘xd8 ♘xd1 12 ♘xb7 ♗xb7 (12...♘xb2 13 ♗xb2 ♗xb2 14 ♖ab1 ♗g7 15 ♘a5 ♗a6 16 ♗xa8 ♗xf1 17 ♔xf1 ♖xa8 18 ♘c6 also leads to equality) 13 ♗xb7 ♖ab8 14 ♖xd1 ♖xb7 = Gadjilu-Fridman, Pula Echt 1997.

b2) 8 d5 ♘e7 9 f4 (9 h3 c6! 10 g4 cxd5 11 exd5 h5! 12 g5 ♘h7 13 ♘g3 ♘f5 14 ♘xf5 ♗xf5 15 h4 f6 ∓ was pleasant for Black in Pulkkinen-Mäki,



Finnish Cht 1995) and Black has a couple of good moves:

b21) 9...♘e8 10 ♗e3 (10 ♔h1 f5 11 exf5 gxf5 is unclear) 10...f5 11 ♕d2 ♘f6 12 fxe5 dxe5 13 ♗g5 ♕d6! 14 ♔h1 ♗d7 = Kochiev-Yrjölä, Jyväskylä 1991.

b22) After 9...exf4 10 ♗xf4 (10 gxf4 c6 11 dxc6 bxc6 ∓) 10...♘g4 11 ♕d2 c5 12 dxc6 ♘xc6 = Black controls the e5-square, which compensates for the weakness of d6. Gulko-Van der Wiel, Amsterdam OHRA 1987 continued 13 h3 ♘ge5 14 b3 ♗e6 15 ♖ad1 ♖c8 16 ♔h1 ♕a5 17 ♘d5 ♕xd2 18 ♖xd2 ♗xd5 19 exd5 ♘b4 20 ♘d4 ♘xa2 21 ♘b5 ♖fd8 22 ♘xa7 ♖a8 23 ♘b5 ♘b4.

b3) 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♗g5 (9 ♘d5 ♘e7 10 ♗g5 ♘fxd5 11 exd5 h6 12 ♗e3 ♘f5 13 ♗c5 ♘d6 =) and now:

b31) The popular line 9...♗e6 10 ♘d5 ♗xd5 11 exd5 ♘e7 12 c4 h6 13 ♗d2 ♘f5 14 ♗c3 ♖e8 may be slightly better for White but leads to complicated play.

b32) 9...♕xd1 is more reliable. Now we have:

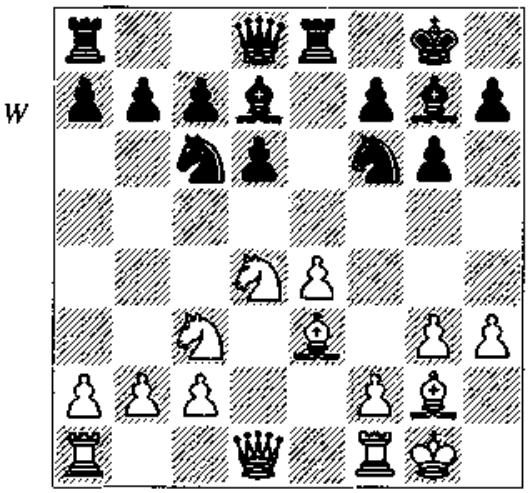
b321) 10 ♖axd1 ♘b4 11 ♖d2 (11 a3 ♘xc2 12 ♖d2 ♘d4 13 ♘xd4 exd4 14 ♖xd4 h6 15 ♗c1 ♗e6 =) 11...c6 12 ♖fd1 ♗e6 = Hille-Baunermann, Hamburg 1993.

b322) 10 ♖fxd1 ♘b4 11 ♘d5 (11 ♘b5 ♘a6 =; 11 ♖d2 c6 12 ♖ad1 is the same as 'b321') 11...♘fxd5 12 exd5 ♗g4 13 f3 ♗f5 14 c3 (14 ♗e7 ♘xc2 15 ♗xf8 ♗xf8 16 ♖ac1 ♗c5+ 17 ♔h1 ♗e3 is at least equal; for example, 18 ♗h3 ♗xc1 19 ♗xf5 gxf5 20 ♖xc1 ♘d4 21 ♘xd4 exd4 22 ♖xc7 ♖d8 =) 14...♘a6 15 ♖d2 f6 16 ♗e3 ♖fd8 17 ♖ad1 ♗f8 = Marcelin-Royer, Argenteuil 1997.

7...♘c6 8 ♗e3 exd4

8...♗d7 9 0-0 a6 will generally transpose: 10 f4 exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♖e8 12 ♖e1 is note 'b' to White's 12th move; 10 a4 exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♖e8 and now 12 ♔h2 is note 'a' to White's 11th move, while 12 ♖e1 transposes to the main line.

9 ♘xd4 ♗d7 10 0-0 ♖e8 *(D)*



11 ♖e1

Or:

a) 11 ♔h2 a6 12 a4 ♘e5!? 13 b3 c5 14 ♘de2 ♗c6 15 ♕d2 b5 16 axb5 axb5 17 ♖xa8 ♕xa8 18 ♕xd6? (18 ♘d5 =) 18...♘xe4 19 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 ∓ gave Black a lot of play in Koelman-Rausis, Haarlem 2000.

b) There is an important alternative which has been more popular in recent years, viz. 11 ♘de2 (motif: White has more space) 11...b5! 12 a3 a5, and now:

b1) 13 ♘f4?! ♖b8 (13...b4!?) 14 f3 b4 (14...♘e5!?) 15 axb4 axb4 16 ♘ce2 ♘e5 17 ♘d3 ♘c4 18 ♗d4?! (18 ♗f2) 18...c5 19 ♗f2 ♗c6 ∓ Gabriel-Hickl, Bad Homburg 1997.

b2) 13 ♘d4!? b4 14 e5! ♘xe5 (perhaps Black should try 14...♘xd4 15 exf6 bxc3 16 fxg7 cxb2 17 ♖b1 ♘f5 18 ♗d2 ♖b8 19 ♗c3 though Sadler thinks White has enough compensation) 15 axb4 c6 16 b5 cxb5! 17 ♘dxb5 and now:

b21) 17...♗xb5 18 ♘xb5 d5 19 ♗d4 ±.

b22) 17...d5 (Sadler-Nevednichy, Erevan OL 1996) and now 18 ♘d6 ♖e6 19 ♘b7 ♕c7 20 ♘c5 gives White some plus.

b3) 13 g4 (the most thematic move) 13...b4 14 axb4 axb4 15 ♖xa8 ♕xa8 16 ♘d5 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♘e5 18 b3 c5! 19 ♘g3 (bad is 19 ♖e1?! f5 20 g5 ♘f7 21 h4 ♖xe3!? 22 fxe3 ♕e8 23 ♕d2 ♘e5 with nice compensation, Relange-Chabanon, French Ch (Narbonne) 1997, while 19 dxc6? ♗xc6 looks like suicide). Now Black has a difficult but pleasant choice:

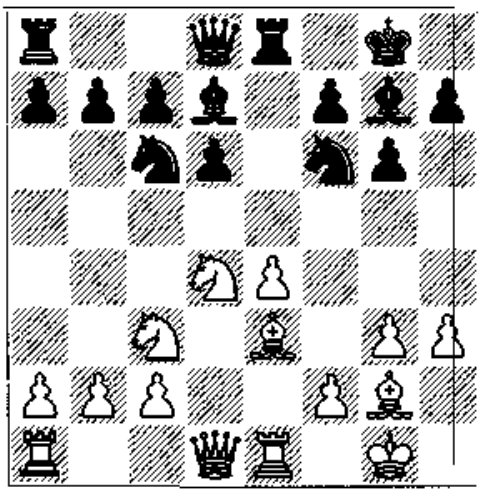
b31) 19...f5 20 gxf5 ♗xf5! 21 ♘xf5 gxf5 is a comfortable way to equalize; the favourable pawn-structure compensates for the bishop-pair.

b32) 19...♕c8 20 ♘e4 ♕b8 21 f4 ♘xg4 22 hxg4 f5 23 gxf5 gxf5 24 ♘g5 ♖xe3 25 ♕h5 h6 (Black can try 25...♕e8 26 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 27 ♗f3 with an unclear position) 26 ♕f7+ ♔h8 27 ♕xd7 hxg5 28 fxg5 ± Gelfand-Adams, Madrid 1996.

b33) 19...c4 20 bxc4 ♕a6 21 ♗d4 ♕xc4 22 ♘e4 ♕xd4 (½-½ Krantzl-Schmidt, Reiffeisen 1997) 23 ♕xd4 ♘f3+ 24 ♗xf3 ♗xd4 25 ♘xd6 ♖a8 with counterplay.

We now return to 11 ♖e1 *(D)*:

B



11...a6

Maybe Black can also equalize with 11...♘xd4 12 ♗xd4 c5! (12...♗c6 ±) 13 ♗e3 ♗c6 14 ♗f4 (though 14 ♕d3!? may be something for White) 14...♖e6 15 ♘d5 ♕d7 16 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 17 c3 ♖ae8 = 18 ♕d2 (18 f3 d5 ∓) 18...♗xe4 19 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 20 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 21 ♕xd6 ♕xd6 22 ♗xd6 ♖e2 23 ♖b1 c4 24 ♗c5 ♖e6 ½-½ Relange-Gadjilu, Pula Echt 1997.

12 a4

Or:

a) After 12 ♔h2 the safest line is 12...♘xd4 (12...♘e5 and 12...♖b8 are also possible) 13 ♗xd4 c5 14 ♗e3 ♗c6 15 ♗f4 ♖e6 as the d6- and e4-pawns are equally weak.

b) 12 f4 is the main alternative:

b1) 12...♘a5!? 13 ♗f2! (13 ♕d3 c5 14 ♘de2 b5! gives Black a useful initiative because after 15 ♕xd6? ♘c4 16 ♕xc5 ♖c8 17 ♕a7 ♖c7 the queen is trapped) 13...c5 14 ♘b3 (14 ♘f3!?) 14...♘c4 15 e5! dxe5 16 fxe5 ♘xe5 17 ♘xc5 ♕c7 (17...♗c6! 18 ♕xd8 ♖axd8 19 ♗xc6 ♘xc6 20 ♘xb7 ♖b8 = is better according to Svidler) 18 ♘xd7 ♘exd7 19 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 20 ♕f3 ± Solozhenkin-Svidler, St Petersburg Ch 1995.

b2) 12...♘xd4 13 ♗xd4 c5 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 ♕xd6 ♗d4+ 16 ♔h2 ♖e6 17 ♕d5 ♗c6 (17...♖b6!? 18 ♘e2 ♗c6 19 ♕xd8+ ♖xd8 also gives Black compensation, Byrne-Mednis, USA Ch 1984) 18 ♕xd8+ ♖xd8 19 ♖ad1 ♖ed6 20 e5 ♖6d7 21 ♗xc6 bxc6 22 ♖e2 (22 ♘e4? ♗g1+, Honfi-Zimmerman, Budapest 1995) 22...♗xc3 23 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 24 bxc3 ♖b7, which is a likely draw.

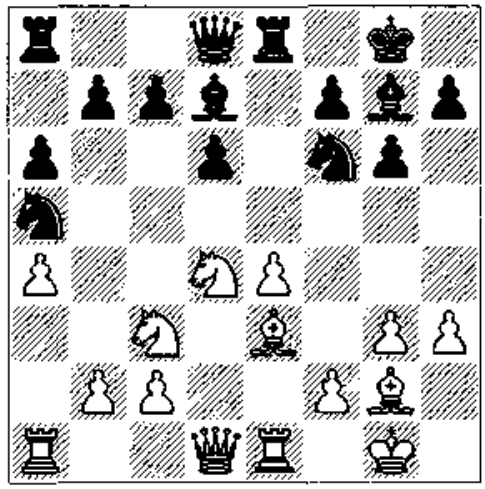
12...♘a5 *(D)*

12...♘b4 is another route to equality with the same plan: ...c5, ...♗c6 and exert pressure on the e4-pawn.

13 g4

White has also tried:

a) 13 ♕d3 c5 14 ♘de2 ♗c6 15 ♖ad1 b5! 16 axb5 axb5 17 ♘xb5 (after 17 ♕xd6 ♕xd6 18 ♖xd6 ♗xe4 19 ♗xc5 Black can at least force a draw with 19...♗xg2 20 ♔xg2 ♘b7 21 ♖c6 ♘d8) 17...♘xe4 18 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 19



♕xd6 ♘xd6 20 ♗xc6 ♘xc6 21 ♖xd6 ♘e5 22 ♔f1 (½-½ Khenkin-Tkachev, French Cht 1998/9) 22...♘c4 ∓.

b) After 13 f4 c5 14 ♘b3 ♘xb3 (or the unclear 14...♘c4!? 15 ♗c1 ♗c6 16 a5 ♕c7 17 ♕d3 ♗b5) 15 cxb3 ♗c6 16 ♗f2 ♕c7 17 a5 ♖e7 the e4-pawn will become a real weakness following 18...♖ae8.

13...c5

Now:

a) 14 ♘de2?! ♗c6 15 ♘g3 ♘c4 16 ♗c1 d5 17 ♗f1? (White is still alive after 17 exd5 ♖xe1+ 18 ♕xe1 ♘xd5 19 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 ∓) 17...d4 18 ♗xc4 dxc3 19 ♕f3 ♕e7 20 ♕xc3 ♘xg4 is much better for Black, Khenkin-Tischbierek, Las Palmas 1997.

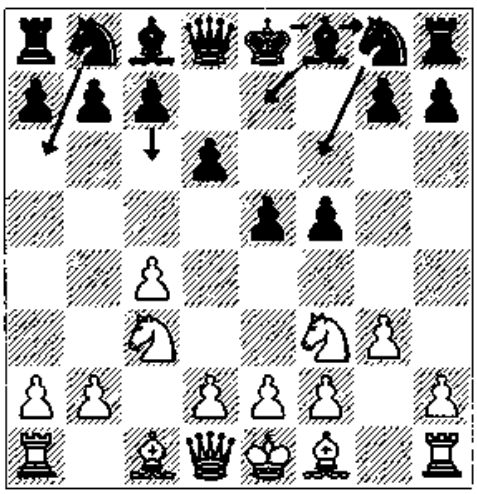
b) According to the Las Palmas tournament bulletin, White should play 14 ♘b3 ♘xb3 15 cxb3 ♗c6 16 f3 d5!? (16...♖e6 =) 17 ♗xc5 ♕c7 with compensation.

Conclusion: 4 g3 has a solid and positional reputation but theoretically it seems White can get nothing if Black plays accurately enough.

26 Other First Moves for White: Introduction

In Chapters 26-30 we concentrate on White's first-move alternatives to 1 d4 and 1 e4. First we pay attention to the systems where White plays c4, ♘c3 and ♘f3. After those moves White may still play d4 at some point; this can easily transpose to lines we have considered earlier but there are also some independent possibilities. White can also skip the active d4, and play in the style of the English Opening. Also important are the flexible English systems where White brings his king's knight into the arena via e2. We also deal with 1 b3, 1 b4 and 1 f4 although they are rather unusual in practice.

B



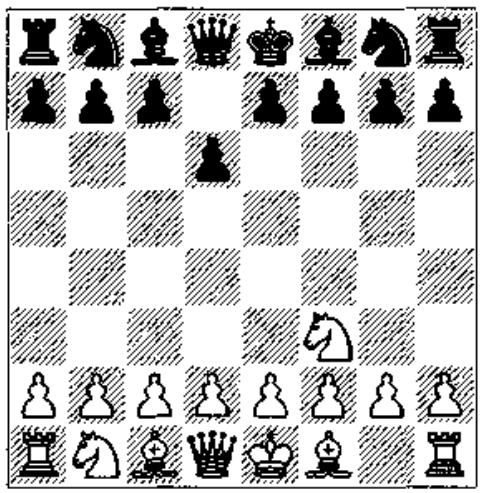
This is in fact the easiest part of the whole repertoire. We have a very logical plan against most of White's slow approaches. First we occupy the centre with the moves ...d6, ...e5 and ...f5. Then we develop the kingside with ...♘f6, ...♗e7 and ...0-0. This is the basic system suitable against everything else except 1 f4. In that case we adopt the system of Part 2: 1...d6 with 2...♗g4 to follow.

After the standard moves of our repertoire there might be several reasonable approaches depending on the system White has chosen. A very typical way to mobilize the queenside is ...c6 and ...♘a6 (possibly with ...a5 first), and maybe ...♗e6. Another plan is to develop the queen's knight via c6. Sometimes Black can find more interesting and unconventional things to do. For example, Black might adopt the active attacking plan on the kingside familiar from the Dutch Defence: ...♕e8-h5, ...f4 and ...♗h3.

In fact, we play a system which Dutch players can usually only dream about when they desperately try to play ...e5. The fianchetto of the king's bishop, in the Leningrad Dutch style, may be at our disposal if White plays really slowly. In the early phase before the move ...f5 we can often transpose to various kinds of Modern systems, too.

27 The Réti and English with ♘f3

1 ♘f3 d6 *(D)*



There are of course many move-orders available to both sides in lines where the forces do not come into contact in the initial stages. However, there is no reason for Black to deviate from the plan, as described in the previous chapter, of ...d6 intending ...e5, with ...f5 and natural, aggressive development to follow.

We divide the material into two sections as follows:

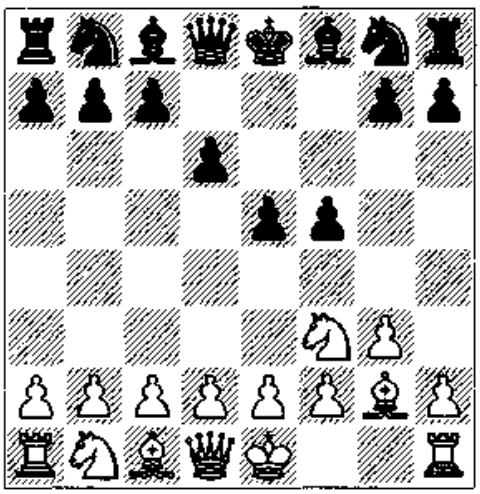
A:	**2 g3**	220
B:	**2 c4**	221

In Line A we are mainly interested in lines where White plays ♗g2 and d3, intending to make the e4 advance, and omits c4.

2 d4 is of course a very common move, but it has already been dealt with in Chapters 11-16 via the move-order 1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3.

A)

2 g3 e5 3 ♗g2 f5 *(D)*



4 0-0

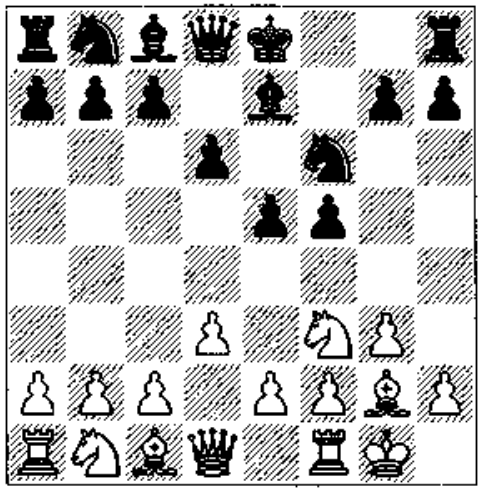
4 d3 ♘f6 5 c3 ♘a6!? (both 5...♗e7 6 ♕b3?! ♘a6 and 5...g6 are playable) 6 0-0 ♗e7 7 b4 and now:

a) There is nothing wrong with 7...0-0 8 ♕b3+ ♔h8 9 ♘g5?! (9 ♘bd2 =) 9...d5 10 ♘f3 e4 11 ♘d4 c5 12 bxc5 ♘xc5 13 ♕c2 ♗d7 14 ♗a3 ♖c8 ∓ Felegyhazi-Rinberg, Nyiregyhaza 1994.

b) 7...c6 8 a4 ♘c7 9 ♘bd2 0-0 (9...♘e6!? works against b5) 10 b5 e4! 11 ♘d4 c5 12 ♘c2 d5 13 c4 ♗e6 14 cxd5 ♘cxd5 15 ♗b2 exd3 16 exd3, Pihlajasalo-Tella, Finnish Cht 2000, and Black's superior structure (d3 is weak) should count after the active 16...f4 ∓.

4...♘f6 5 d3 ♗e7 *(D)*

W



6 e4

White has several alternatives; some more active, some less active:

a) 6 c4 0-0 7 ♘c3 transposes to Line B1.

b) 6 c3 0-0 7 ♕b3+ ♔h8 8 ♘bd2 (8 ♘g5 d5 ∓) 8...♘a6 is not dangerous for Black.

c) Rather passive is 6 ♘bd2 0-0 7 e4 ♘c6 8 c3 a5! (preventing b4 for a while) 9 a4 ♔h8 10 ♕c2 ♕e8 11 ♖b1 ♕h5 12 ♖e1?! (12 b4) 12...fxe4 13 dxe4 ♗g4 14 b4 ♘d7 15 ♖e3 ♘b6 16 b5 ♘d8 17 ♗a3 ♘e6 ∓ Iliadis-Kotronias, Komotini 1993.

d) 6 ♘c3 0-0 7 e4 ♘c6 (7...fxe4 8 dxe4 transposes to the note to Black's 6th move) 8 ♖e1 (8 ♘d5 ♔h8 9 ♘xe7 ♕xe7 10 ♘e1 f4! 11 gxf4 exf4 12 f3 ♘h5 13 d4 ♕g5 14 c3 ♘e7 gives Black the initiative, S.Nikolić-Nikčević, Belgrade 1991) and now there are two logical options:

d1) 8...♕e8 9 exf5 (9 ♘d5 ♗d8) 9...♗xf5 10 h3 ♕d7 11 ♔h2 ♖ae8 with an equal position, Karlik-Jakubiez, Litomysl 1995.

d2) 8..fxe4 9 dxe4 ♗g4 10 h3 ♗h5 11 g4 ♗g6 12 ♕d3 (12 ♘h4 ♗xe4) 12...♘d7 13 ♗e3 a6 14 ♖ad1 ♔h8 15 ♘d5 ♘c5!? 16 ♗xc5 dxc5 17 c3 ♗d6 = Sorokin-Vyzhmanavin, Moscow rpd 1992.

6...0-0

6...fxe4!? 7 dxe4 0-0 (7...♘xe4!? 8 ♘xe5 ♘f6 = should be playable although there is a weakness on e6) 8 ♘c3 c6 9 a4 a5 10 h3 ♘a6 11 ♕e2 ♔h8 12 b3 ♗e6 = Bukhman-Goldin, Philadelphia 1991.

7 exf5 ♗xf5 8 ♘bd2

8 ♘h4!? ♗g4 9 f3 ♗e6 10 f4 ♘c6 = is more active.

8...♘c6 9 ♘c4 ♕d7 10 ♖e1 ♗h3 11 ♗h1 ♘g4!

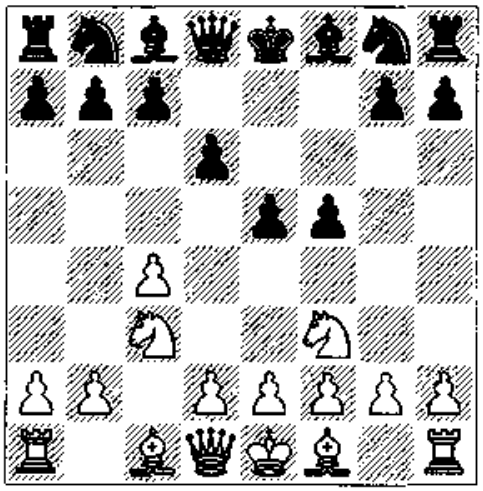
Pressure on the f-file is unpleasant for White: 12 c3 ♔h8 13 b4 b5! (Black opens another front) 14 ♘cd2 (14 ♘e3 a5 15 bxa5 ♖xa5 16 ♘d5 ∓) 14...a5 15 bxa5 ♖xa5 16 ♗b2?! ♕f5 17 ♕e2 d5 ∓ Seeman-Poluliakhov, St Petersburg Chigorin mem 1997.

Conclusion: These systems with ♘f3 and e4 are rather modest, and White often has to fight for equality.

B)

2 c4 e5 3 ♘c3 f5 *(D)*

W



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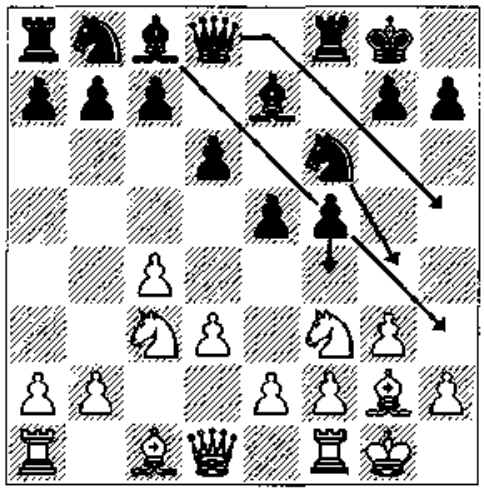


Now:

B1: 4 d3 222
B2: 4 d4 224
B3: 4 g3 226

In Line B3, we consider lines where White follows up with a later d4, rather than d3. Lines with g3 and d3 are covered in Line B1.

B1)

4 d3 ♘f6 5 g3

5 e4!? ♗e7 6 ♗e2 0-0 7 0-0 c5!? (Black has of course several playable possibilities like 7...♘c6, 7...♘a6 8 a3 fxe4 9 dxe4 ♘c5 10 b4 ♘e6 = or 7...a5) 8 a3 ♘c6 9 ♖b1 ♘d4 10 exf5 ♗xf5 11 ♘g5 h6 12 ♘ge4 ♘xe4 13 dxe4 ♗e6 14 b3 a6 15 ♗g4 ♗f7 is equal, G.Mohr-Srebrnić, Slovenian Ch 1992.

5...♗e7 6 ♗g2 0-0 7 0-0 *(D)*

7 c5 ♔h8 8 cxd6 cxd6 9 0-0 ♘c6 10 ♗g5 ♕e8 11 e3 ♗e6 12 ♘d2 ♖b8 13 ♖c1 ♕f7 14 a3 h6 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 was fine for Black in Sherwin-Conquest, British League (4NCL) 1999/00 because of his large pawn-centre.

7...♕e8

With this move Black starts an aggressive general plan: ...♕h5, ...f4, ...♗h3 and ...♘g4.

7...♘a6!? 8 ♖b1 c6 9 b4 ♘c7 is quite a solid plan:

a) 10 c5!? ♔h8 11 cxd6 ♗xd6 12 b5 cxb5 13 ♘xb5 ♘xb5 14 ♖xb5 a6 15 ♖b1 ♖b8 16 a4 b5 = Kamsky-Malaniuk, Moscow Intel rpd 1994.

b) 10 b5 c5 (10...♕e8!?) 11 ♗g5 ♘g4 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 13 b6 axb6 14 ♖xb6 ♖a6 15 ♕b1 ± Alterman-Van der Wiel, Erevan OL 1996.

8 c5

This is the most critical move, by which White tries to open lines. However, White has alternatives:

a) The tame 8 e3 is certainly not very critical: 8...♕h5 9 ♘d2 ♕xd1 10 ♖xd1 a5 (10...♘a6!?) 11 f4 ♘a6 12 ♘f3 ½-½ Spraggett-Ivkov, Cannes 1990.

b) 8 ♘d5 ♗d8! (a beautiful study-like prophylactic move) 9 ♗g5 (9 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 10 ♖b1 a5 11 b3 c6 12 a3 ♘a6 13 b4 axb4 14 axb4 ♘c7 15 ♗b2 ♗d7 16 ♕c2 f4 ∓ Stoll-Milov, Berne 1994) 9...♘bd7 10 ♖c1 c6 11 ♘xf6+

♗xf6 12 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 13 b4 f4! 14 ♕d2 h6 15 e3 (Black's attack is strong after 15 gxf4 exf4 16 ♕xf4 ♘h5 17 ♕xd6 ♘f4) 15...fxg3 16 fxg3 ♕h5 with a slight advantage for Black, Vaganian-Lobron, Frankfurt rpd 1997.

c) After 8 b4 Black can play:

c1) 8...a5!? 9 bxa5 (9 b5 ♘bd7) 9...♗d8 10 a4 c6 11 ♗a3 ♗xa5 12 ♕c2 ♗xc3 13 ♕xc3 c5 14 a5 ♘c6 15 ♗c1 ♕h5 = Zilberman-Nenashev, USSR Cht (Azov) 1991.

c2) 8...♕h5 is logical:

c21) 9 ♕c2 f4! 10 b5 (10 gxf4 ♗h3 gives Black an attack) 10...♗h3 11 ♘d5 ♘xd5 12 cxd5 ♗d8 ∓ (Black has carried out his general plan unhindered) 13 ♗xh3 ♕xh3 14 d4 fxg3 15 fxg3 ♘d7 16 ♗b2 exd4 17 ♘xd4 (17 ♗xd4) 17...♗g5! 18 ♕c3 ♘e5 ∓ Barcelo-Eslon, Palma de Mallorca 1991.

c22) Again 9 ♘d5 should be met by 9...♗d8! 10 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 11 ♗b2 ♘c6 (11...f4!, with ...♗h3 to follow, looks good) 12 b5 ♘d8 13 a4 g5 14 ♘d2 = Seibold-Burkhardt, Bavaria 1996/7.

c23) 9 c5 (sharp action is needed) 9...dxc5 10 bxc5 ♘c6 11 d4?! (11 ♘b5 ♗xc5 12 ♘xc7 ♖b8 13 ♕b3+ ♔h8 is slightly better for Black) 11...e4 12 ♘e5 ♘xe5 13 dxe5 ♘g4 14 ♕d5+ ♕f7 15 c6 (15 h3 ♘xe5) 15...♗e6 16 ♕b5 bxc6 ∓ Supatashvili-Kovaliov, Leningrad Cht 1989.

8...♔h8

This is a useful move, since White often has some tactics based on the king's position on g8.

Black has various other playable moves but a very logical one is 8...♘c6 9 cxd6 ♗xd6, when White must worry about the ...e4 break:

a) 10 a3 ♔h8 11 b4?! e4! 12 dxe4 fxe4 13 ♘d4 ♘xd4 14 ♕xd4 ♗e5 ∓ 15 ♕c5 b6 16 ♕e3 and now instead of 16...♗f5 (Wenzel-Seul, Bundesliga 1994/5), the strike 16...♘g4 17 ♕d2 ♖xf2 −+ is murderous.

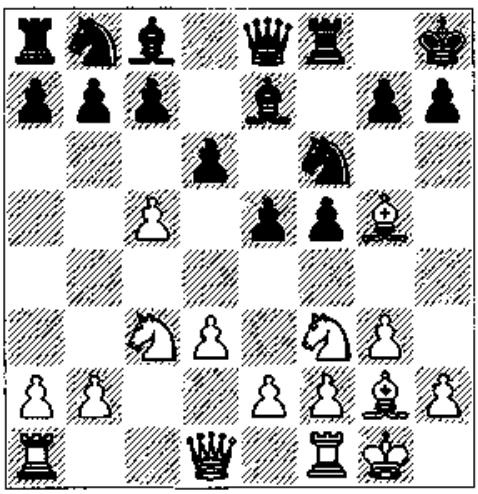
b) 10 ♘b5 is critical, but doesn't stop Black's general plan.

c) 10 ♘d2 ♗e6 11 ♕a4 ♕h5 12 ♘c4 ♘d4! 13 ♘xd6 cxd6 14 ♕d1 f4! 15 ♗xb7? d5 16 ♗xa8 f3! and Black got a decisive attack in Stefanopoulos-Ibragimov, Athens 1993.

9 ♗g5!? *(D)*

Another, maybe more natural continuation is 9 cxd6 cxd6 (perhaps more solid is 9...♗xd6 =, when 10 a3 c6 11 b4 a5 gave Black counterplay in Dinh-Tu, Melbourne 1995) 10 a3 (why not 10 b4!? ♘c6 11 b5 ♘d4 12 a4 instead?) 10...♘c6 11 b4 a6 12 b5 axb5 13 ♘xb5 ♕d8 14 a4 ♗e6 15 ♗a3 d5!? 16 d4 e4 17 ♘e5 ♘g4! 18 ♘xg4 fxg4 19 f3 gxf3 20 exf3 exf3 21 ♖xf3 with equality, Spiridonov-Gofshtein, Paris 1998.

B



9...c6

A solid move, although 9...♘c6 10 ♘b5 ♕d8 is more according to the spirit of the line. Black can use his massive pawn-centre.

10 cxd6 ♗xd6 11 ♖c1 ♘a6 12 e4?!

This is a strange decision due to the bad bishop on g2 and weakness of f2, though it is not easy to find a constructive idea for White. However, 12 a3 ♕g6!? 13 b4 ♘c7 = is quite logical.

12...fxe4 13 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 14 dxe4 ♗c5 15 ♕b3 ♗b6 16 ♕c3!?

Things are quite easy for Black after 16 ♗e3 ♗g4 ∓.

16...♗g4!

This is Sammalvuo-Yrjölä, Helsinki 2000. White hadn't sacrificed the exchange deliberately, but still he got some compensation, which grew rapidly after Black played active moves at the wrong moments: 17 ♘xe5 ♗e2 18 ♘c4 ♗xf1 19 ♖xf1 ♘c5 20 e5! ♕e6 21 b3 ♘d7 22 ♗c1! ♗c5 23 b4 ♗e7 (23...♗b6) 24 f4 b5?! (24...♘b6) 25 ♘e3 ♖ac8 26 ♗b2 c5 27 f5 ♕h6 28 f6 cxb4 29 ♕d3 ♗c5 30 ♕xd7 ♗xe3+ 31 ♔h1 gxf6? (31...♖c2 32 e6 ±) 32 exf6 ♗d2 33 ♕g7+ ♕xg7 34 fxg7+ ♔g8 35 ♗d5+ 1-0.

Conclusion: This is an important line in practice and Black has scored well even though White's developing moves are the most natural. Black has a clear-cut general plan which tends to work well if White doesn't react actively enough.

B2)

4 d4 e4 5 ♗g5

This is the only independent possibility in this move-order. Otherwise:

a) 5 ♘g5 transposes to Chapters 2, 3 and 6.

b) 5 ♘d2 ♘f6 6 e3 transposes to Line B of Chapter 5.

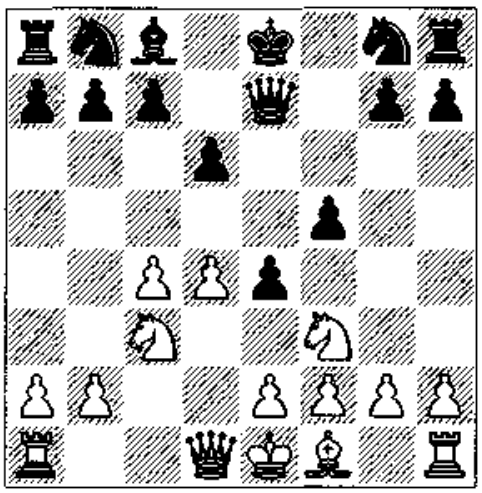
5...♗e7

Better than 5...♘f6 6 ♘d2 ±.

6 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 *(D)*

6...♘xe7 is less natural though it is playable. A set-up with the queen on e7 and the knight on f6 is more active.

W



7 ♘d2

Or:

a) White doesn't benefit much from the knight adventure 7 ♘d5 ♕d8 8 ♘d2 c6 9 ♘c3 ♘f6 10 e3 0-0 11 ♗e2, when, compared with the main line, Black has played ...c6 instead of ...♕e7. 11...♘a6 12 ♕b3 ♘c7 13 0-0 ♕e8!? (13...♔h8 intending ...d5 looks natural) 14 ♖ael ♕g6 15 ♗d1 ♔h8 16 ♕b4 c5! 17 ♕a3 b6 gave Black a good position in Rozsnyai-Nagy, Hungary 1998.

b) White can also head for the f4-square: 7 ♘g1 ♘f6 8 e3 c6 (in the game

Ibragimov-Sakaev, São Paulo 1991, a closed strategy worked well: 8...0-0 9 ♘h3 c6 10 ♘f4 ♘a6 11 h4 ♘c7 12 d5 c5!? 13 a3 ♕e5 14 ♖b1 ♗d7 15 ♕d2 a5 16 ♗e2 ♖fb8 ½-½) 9 h4 ♘a6 10 ♘h3 ♘c7 11 d5 (11 ♘f4 ♘e6 is level) 11...cxd5!? 12 cxd5 ♕e5 13 ♘f4 0-0 14 ♕d2 ♗d7 15 a4 a6 16 a5 ♗e8 (16...♖fb8!?, with ...b5 to follow, is another plan) 17 ♗c4 ♗f7 18 ♖d1 ♖ad8 19 ♘a4 g6 20 ♕d4 ♖fe8 21 ♘b6 h6 22 ♘e2 ♘a8 = Knott-Rowson, British Ch (Torquay) 1998.

7...♘f6

Interesting, somehow natural but probably unnecessary is 7...e3!? 8 fxe3 ♘f6 9 e4 f4 (9...fxe4 10 e3 0-0 11 ♗e2 ±) 10 ♕b3 ♘c6 11 ♘d5?! (11 ♘f3 ♘xe4 12 ♘d5 ♕f7 13 e3 ± looks better) 11...♘xd4 12 ♕d3 ♘xd5 13 cxd5 c5 14 dxc6 ♘xc6 15 0-0-0 ♘e5 16 ♕d4 0-0 17 ♔b1 ♗e6 ∓ Tarasenko-Vaulin, Moscow 1995.

8 e3 0-0 9 ♗e2

The value of 9 b4!? depends on how much counterplay 9...f4!? gives Black (note that 10 exf4? allows 10...e3).

9...c5!? *(D)*

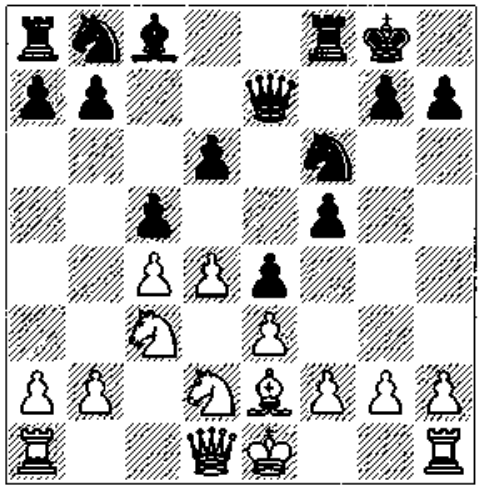
Of course the natural moves 9...a5 and 9...♘c6 are also possible.

10 ♘b3 ♗e6

Rogers's 10...b6! is preferable, since it makes the b3-knight look clumsy:

a) After 11 dxc5? dxc5! 12 ♘d5 ♕e5! 13 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 ∓ Black has a strong centralized queen.

b) 11 ♕d2 ♗b7 and now White should play safe with 12 0-0. Instead, the ambitious 12 0-0-0?! is very risky: 12...♘c6 13 f4 exf3 14 ♗xf3 ♔h8 15 ♖he1 ♘e4! 16 ♗xe4 fxe4 17 ♘d5



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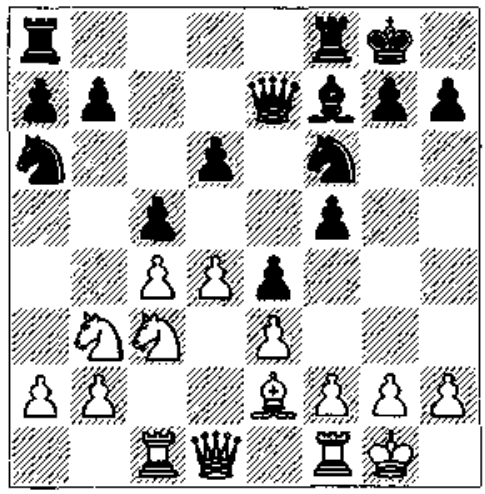
♕f7 18 ♕e2 ♗a6! 19 ♕c2 cxd4 20 exd4 b5! 21 cxb5 ♕xd5 22 bxc6 ♖ac8 23 ♔b1 ♖xc6 24 ♕d2 ♗d3+ 25 ♔a1 ♕xb3 0-1 Uhlmann-Dunnington, Zillertal 1993.

11 0-0 ♗f7

Black wants to play ...♘c6 but...

12 ♖c1! ♘a6 *(D)*

The c5-pawn becomes weak after 12...♘c6? 13 dxc5 dxc5 14 ♘d5! ±. Both 12...♘bd7 13 ♘a5 ± and 12...b6 13 f4 ± also look less active for Black than the text-move.



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Now:

a) 13 ♕d2 ♖ad8 14 ♘a1?! (Lautier thinks that 14 a3 = intending ♘a5 and b4 is better) 14...♘b4! 15 d5?! (15 a3 ♘c6 16 ♘c2 d5 ∓ is also promising for Black) 15...♗h5 16 f3 exf3 17 gxf3 and then:

a1) 17...♖de8?! 18 a3 ♘a6 19 ♘c2 f4! 20 exf4 (20 e4?! g5 ∓ followed by ...♘b8-d7-e5 is positionally very bad for White) 20...♗g6 21 ♘e1! ♘h5 22 f5 ♖xf5? (22...♗xf5 23 f4 ♕f7 ∓ is more natural and better) 23 f4 ± Lautier-Cu.Hansen, Biel 1992.

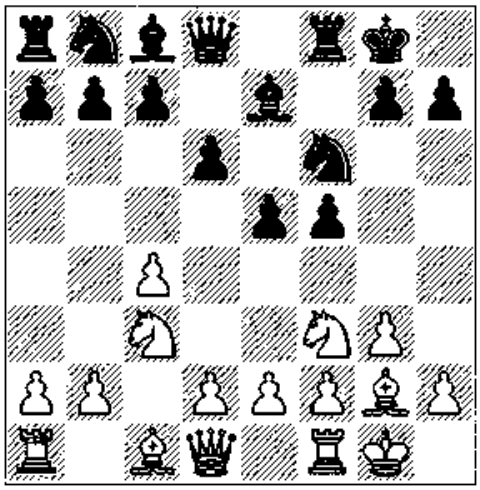
a2) 17...f4! is better: 18 exf4 (18 e4 g5 ∓) 18...♗g6 ∓ followed by ...♘h5.

b) According to Lautier White should play 13 ♘d5! ♘xd5 14 cxd5 ♘b4! 15 a3 (15 dxc5?! ♘xa2! 16 ♖c4 dxc5 17 ♘xc5 ♖ad8 ∓) 15...♘xd5 16 dxc5 dxc5 17 ♖xc5, but Black seems to get a lot of counterplay after 17...♖ad8 (17...♖fd8 18 ♕c2 ±) 18 ♕c2 b6 19 ♖c4 (19 ♖c6? f4 ∓) 19...♕g5 20 ♔h1 f4.

Conclusion: Black need not be worried about this possibility since the exchange of the dark-squared bishops is not unfavourable for him.

B3)

4 g3 ♘f6 5 ♗g2 ♗e7 6 0-0 0-0 *(D)*



7 d4

7 c5 ♘c6 8 cxd6 cxd6 9 d4?! (9 b4?! e4; 9 d3) 9...e4 10 ♘g5 d5 ∓ gives Black a strong centre, Taimanov-Balashov, USSR Ch (Leningrad) 1974.

7...e4 8 ♘e1

8 ♘g5 c6 9 d5 (9 ♘h3) 9...♔h8 10 ♔h1?! (10 ♘h3 transposes to Line B2 of Chapter 2) 10...♘xd5 11 ♘gxe4 ♘b6 12 ♘d2 ♗e6 13 b3 d5 14 cxd5 ♘xd5 15 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 16 ♗xd5 ♕xd5+ 17 ♘f3 ♕xd1 18 ♖xd1 ♗f6 = Vogt-Züger, Zurich 1999.

8...c6 9 d5

Allowing Black to play ...d5 usually doesn't promise White anything:

a) 9 ♘c2 d5 10 cxd5 ♘xd5 =.

b) 9 ♕b3 ♔h8 10 f3 d5 and now:

b1) 11 ♗f4?! dxc4 12 ♕xc4 b5 13 ♕b3 b4 14 ♘d1 ♕xd4+ ∓ Friedman-Bologan, New York 1993.

b2) Better is 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 ♗g5 ♘c6 13 ♗xf6 (13 e3 ♘a5 is also equal) 13...♗xf6 14 e3 ♘e7 =.

9...♘bd7 10 ♘c2 *(D)*

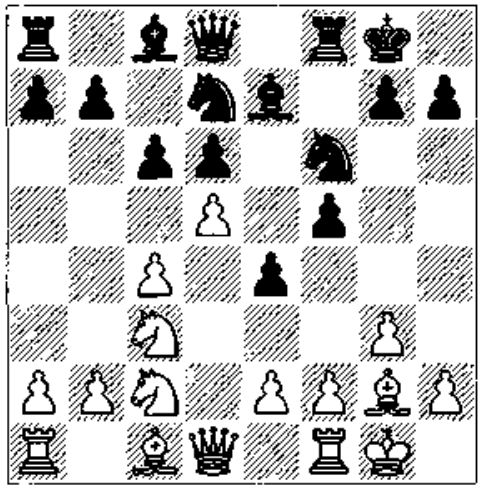
10 f3 ♘e5 11 fxe4?! ♕b6+ 12 ♔h1 ♘fg4 looks risky for White.

This position can be compared with the similar one in Line B2 of Chapter 2 where White's knight is on h3 instead of c2. Which one is better? From h3 the knight has a shorter route to e6 at least.

10...♘e5 11 b3 c5!?

Now Belov considers the position completely equal, since the c2-knight doesn't look very active. However,

B



Black has some alternatives to test: 11...♗d7 and 11...♔h8, for example.

12 f3 exf3 13 exf3 ♘e8

White has some space advantage but it is not easy to benefit from the only weakness in Black's camp: the e6-square. White is slightly better after 13...♗d7 14 f4 ♘eg4 15 h3 ♘h6 16 ♕d3 ♘h5 17 ♔h2 ♗f6 18 ♗f3, Lupu-Bern, Haifa Echt 1989.

14 f4 ♘g6

Black is going to over-protect the weak e6-square, but more natural is 14...♘f7 15 ♗b2 ♗f6 16 ♖b1 g6 with the regrouping plan ...♗g7, ...♘f6 and ...♖e8.

15 ♗b2 ♗f6 16 ♖b1

Black gets counterplay after 16 ♕d2 ♗d7 17 ♖ae1 b5!?.

16...♗d7 17 a3 ♘c7 18 b4 b6 19 ♕d2

After 19 bxc5 bxc5 20 ♗a1 ♖b8 21 ♕d2 ♘a8! with ...♘b6 to follow, Black can regroup his pieces nicely.

19...♖e8 20 ♗f3 ♘f8 21 ♘e2

Or 21 bxc5 bxc5 22 ♘e2 ♖b8 23 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 = 24 ♕a5 ♖b2!.

21...♗xb2 22 ♖xb2 ♕f6 23 ♖fb1

After 23 ♘c3!? ♘a6 24 ♖e1 ± White still has some advantage according to Belov, though it is not easy to see what is he going to do after, for example, 24...♖xe1+ 25 ♕xe1 (25 ♘xe1 ♖c8) 25...♖e8 26 ♕d2 ♗c8 27 ♖b1 ♘c7.

23...♘a6! 24 ♘c3 ♖e7

= Dragomaretsky-Ibragimov, Alushta 1993.

Conclusion: This line is very similar to the ones in Part 1 except that the knight comes to c2 instead of h3. White gains a small space advantage in the closed position but can hardly benefit from the only weakness in Black's position, namely the e6-square.

28 The English Opening without an Early ♘f3

1 c4 d6 2 ♘c3

Of course, 2 d4 is discussed under 1 d4 d6 2 c4.

2...e5 *(D)*

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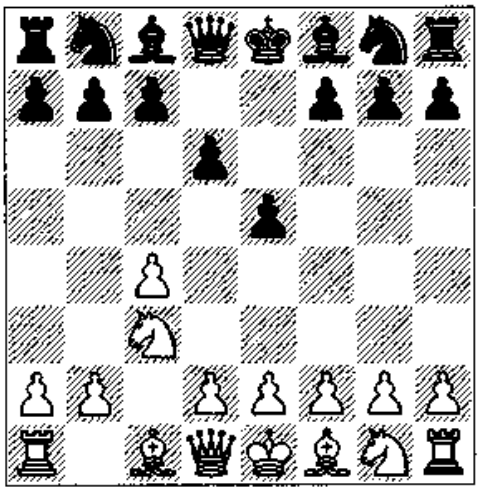

3 g3

For 3 d4, see 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘c3.

3..f5 4 ♗g2

White can also play the immediate 4 d4 ♗e7 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 ♕xd8+ ♗xd8 7 e4!? (7 ♗g2 ♘f6 transposes to Line A) 7...♘c6 8 ♗e3 (Suba's idea; 8 ♗d2 ♘f6 9 ♗d3 0-0 10 exf5 e4 11 ♘xe4 ♖e8 12 f3 ♗xf5 13 0-0-0 ♘xe4 14 fxe4 ♘e5 15 ♗c2 ♗g4 16 ♖e1 ♘xc4 ∓ Varberg-Rowson, Copenhagen Politiken Cup 1996) 8...♘f6 9 ♗d3 g6?! (9...fxe4 10 ♘xe4 0-0 11 ♘e2 ♗g4 looks at least equal) 10 ♘ge2 0-0 11 0-0 ♗e6 12 b3 ± Suba-Yepes Martinez, Castellar 1995.

4...♘f6

Now:

A: 5 d4	229
B: 5 d3	230

Another plan is 5 e3 ♗e7 6 ♘ge2 0-0 7 0-0 c6 8 d4 ♘a6 *(D)*, when White's c4-pawn is vulnerable, and Black may be able to exploit this. White now has time to do something on the queenside:

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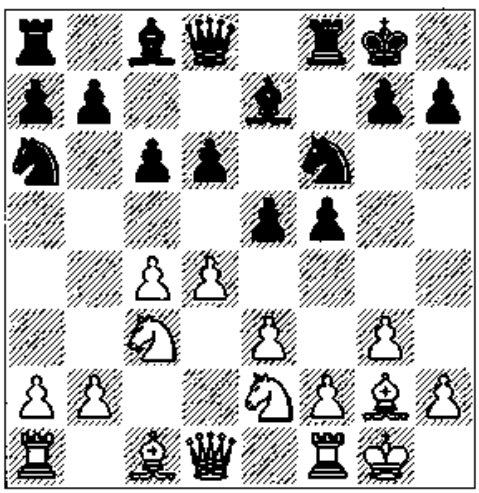


a) 9 a3 ♘c7 10 b4 ♗e6! 11 b5 ♗xc4 12 bxc6 bxc6 13 ♗xc6 ♖b8 14 ♕a4 d5! 15 dxe5 ♘e4 16 ♘xe4?! fxe4 17 ♕d1 ♕c8 with a massive attack for Black, Reinderman-Van der Wiel, Dutch Ch 1996.

b) 9 b3 e4!? (9...♘c7 10 ♗a3 e4 11 ♕d2 d5 12 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 = Urday-Pomes, Oviedo rpd 1992) 10 d5 c5 11 f3 exf3 12 ♗xf3 ♘c7 13 a4 ♘d7 14 ♗g2 ♘e5 15 ♘f4 ♗f6 = Idigoras-Slipak, Buenos Aires 1992.

c) 9 ♖b1 ♘c7 (9...♗e6?! 10 d5) 10 b4 (less logical is 10 b3 e4 11 ♗b2 d5 12 ♖c1 g5 13 ♕c2 ♗d6 14 c5 ♗e7 15 f4 h6 = Spraggett-Vaganian, Montpellier Ct 1985) 10...♖b8!? (now the natural idea 10...♗e6 11 b5 ♗xc4 12 bxc6 bxc6 13 ♗xc6 ♖b8 14 ♖xb8 ♕xb8 15 ♕a4 ± is not so good for Black, but 10...e4!? looks playable) 11 b5 c5 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 b6 axb6 14 ♖xb6 ♕xd1 15 ♖xd1 ♖d8 16 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 17 ♗a3 ♘e6 18 ♖b5 e4 = Williams-Ansell, British League (4NCL) 1999/00.

A)

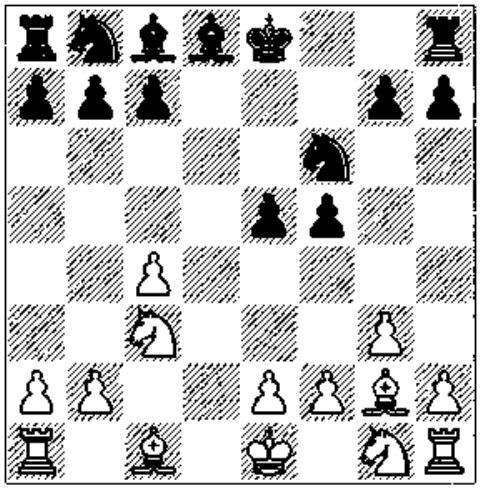
5 d4 ♗e7

Better than 5...e4?! 6 f3 exf3 7 ♘xf3 ±.

6 dxe5

6 ♘f3 e4 7 ♘g5 c6 is likely to transpose to Chapter 2 or Line A of Chapter 4. Hjartarson-Psakhis, Iceland-Israel 1996 continued 8 d5 ♘a6 9 ♘h3 ♘c7 10 a4 0-0 11 0-0 and now Black's most solid idea is 11...a5 followed by ...♘a6.

6...dxe5 7 ♕xd8+ ♗xd8 *(D)*



Black doesn't seem to have any trouble at all in this ending. As in the other typical endings in our repertoire, Black has the central squares under control and the queenside pieces can be placed harmoniously: typically the knight comes to a6 and bishop to c7. Here Black usually castles but the king also has the more central f7-square at its disposal.

8 b3

The other moves are not dangerous either:

a) White even got into trouble after 8 e4?! c6 (8...♘c6 9 ♘ge2 0-0 =) 9 ♘ge2 ♘a6 10 0-0 ♘c5 11 ♗g5 0-0 12 exf5 ♗xf5 13 h3 ♗d3 ∓ in Bilek-Barcza, Hungarian Ch (Budapest) 1957.

b) 8 ♘f3 ♘c6 9 0-0 e4 10 ♘g5 ♘e5 11 b3 c6 12 ♗b2 h6 13 ♘h3 ♗c7 14 f3 exf3 15 exf3 ♗d7 16 ♖ad1 0-0-0 17 ♘a4 b6 18 ♘f4 ♖he8 = Schandorff-Gulko, Copenhagen Politiken Cup 2000.

8...c6 9 ♗b2 0-0

9...♘a6 10 ♘f3 e4 11 ♘d4 ♔f7 is also level. After 12 ♘c2 ♘c5 13 b4 ♘e6 14 f3 exf3 15 exf3 a5! 16 a3 f4! Black took the initiative in Salaun-Gofshtein, French Cht 1998.

10 ♘f3 ♖e8

Black can also play:

a) 10...e4 11 ♘d4 ♗b6 12 ♖d1 ♖d8 13 ♘c2 ♖xd1+ 14 ♘xd1 ♔f7 with an equal position, McNab-Gayson, British League (4NCL) 2000/1.

b) 10...♘bd7 11 0-0 ♖e8 12 ♖ad1 ♗c7 13 ♘h4 g6 14 e4 f4 15 ♘f3 fxg3 16 hxg3 ♘f8 (16...♘c5 17 b4 ♘e6 18 ♖fe1 ♘g4 = 19 ♘d5? cxd5 20 exd5 ♗b6! 21 c5 ♘xc5 22 bxc5 ♗xc5 ∓ Taimanov-Vaganian, Leningrad 1977) 17 ♖d3 ♗g4 18 ♘h2 ♗e6 19 ♘a4 ♖ad8 20 ♖fd1 ♖xd3 21 ♖xd3 ♘8d7 = Agrest-Nenashev, New York Open 1998.

11 0-0 ♘a6 12 ♖ad1 ♗c7 13 e4?

This idea doesn't work, though after normal moves Black can ensure at least equality with a quick ...e4; e.g., 13 ♖fe1 e4 14 ♘d4 f4!? (14...♔f7 =) 15 gxf4 ♗xf4 with unclear play or 13 ♘h4 ♗e6 14 e4 (14 ♗h3 g5!) 14...f4 =.

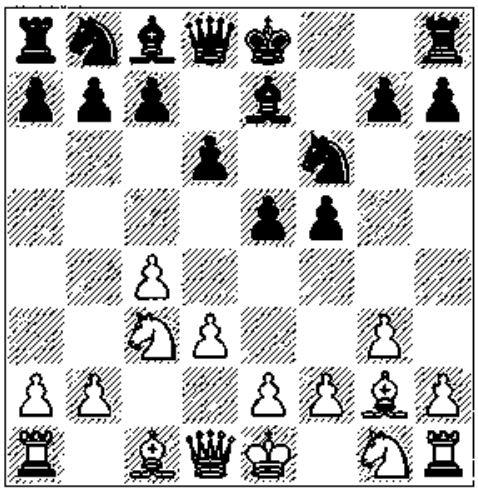
13...fxe4 14 ♘g5 ♗g4 15 ♖del ♘c5

∓ Erwich-Psakhis, Vlissingen 2000.

Conclusion: This ending offers White nothing.

B)

5 d3 ♗e7 *(D)*



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6 e3

Alternatively:

a) A fairly standard plan from White's point of view is 6 e4 c6 7 ♘ge2 0-0 8 0-0 ♘a6 (8...a5 first is certainly playable) 9 d4!? (the solid moves 9 ♖b1 and 9 b3 are good enough for equality while the plan 9 h3?! ♕e8 10 ♗e3?! ♕h5 11 ♘c1 f4! 12 gxf4 exf4 13 ♗xf4 ♗xh3 14 ♕xh5 ♘xh5 15 ♗xh3 ♘xf4 ∓ proved unsuccessful in S.Horvath-Ibragimov, Szekszard 1995) 9...♕e8 and now the slow 10 a3?! fxe4 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 13 ♗xe4 ♘c5 14 ♗g2 ♗f5 ∓ allowed Black immense activity in Varberg-Gulko, Copenhagen 1996.

b) Some strong players seem to like 6 f4!?:

b1) 6...exf4 7 ♗xf4 0-0 8 ♘f3 c6 9 ♕d2 ♘a6 10 0-0 ♘c5 11 ♘d4 ♘g4! 12 h3 ♘e5 13 ♖f2 ♗f6 14 ♗e3 g6 15 ♖af1 ♗g7 = Serper-Dolmatov, Manila OL 1992.

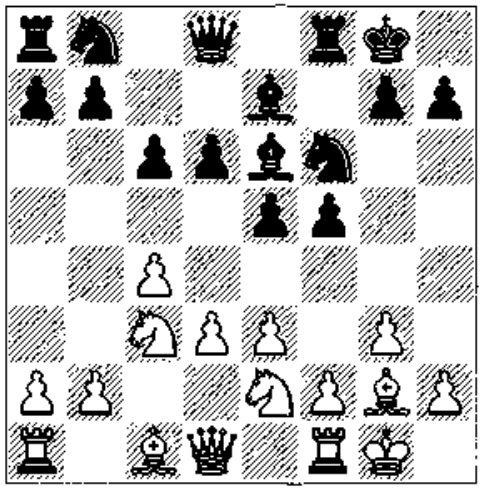
b2) 6...0-0 7 ♘f3 exf4 (7...♘c6 8 0-0 ♖b8 9 e3 ♕e8 10 a3 a6 11 ♕c2 ♗d7 ± Makarychev-Cherepkov, USSR Army Cht 1990) 8 gxf4 (8 ♗xf4 transposes to 'b1') 8...c6 9 0-0 ♘a6 10 ♔h1 ♘c7 11 b3 ♕e8 12 ♕d2 ♕h5 13 e3 ♗d7 14 ♗b2 ♖ae8 15 ♘e2 ♘g4 16 ♘g3 ♕h6 17 ♖ael c5 ½-½ Makarychev-Vaulin, Russian Cht (Kazan) 1995. Black's pieces are placed harmoniously and he is at least equal.

6...0-0 7 ♘ge2 c6

7...a5 8 0-0 c6 9 b3 ♘a6 10 ♗b2 ♗d7 11 ♖c1 ♘c7 12 ♕d2 ♔h8 13 f4 ♘g4 14 h3 ♘h6 15 ♘a4 exf4 16 exf4 ♗f6 17 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 18 ♘b6 ♖a6 19 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 ± was not quite as convincing in Hjartarson-Christiansen, Reykjavik tt 1990.

8 0-0 ♗e6 *(D)*

W



9 f4

Slow moves like 9 b3 allow Black to play 9...d5 (9...♘bd7 10 d4!? ±) 10 f4 (both 10 ♗b2 ♘bd7 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 d4 e4 13 ♘f4 ♗f7 = and 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 d4 e4 12 ♗d2 ♘c6 13 f4 exf3 14 ♗xf3 g5 15 ♗g2 ♕d7 ∓ Raičević-Vaulin, Niš 1993, are fine for Black) 10...e4 11 ♘d4 ♗d7 12 cxd5 ♘xd5 (12...cxd5!?) 13 ♘xd5 cxd5 14 dxe4 dxe4 15 g4 fxg4 16 ♗xe4 ♘c6 though this position is far from clear, S.Farago-Vaulin, Budapest 1994.

9...♘a6

Black can also play 9...♘bd7 10 b3 ♕e8 11 ♕d2 (11 ♗a3!? g5?! 12 ♕d2 ♕h5 13 fxe5 ♘xe5 14 h3 is slightly better for White, Sznapik-Fridjonsson, Stockholm 1964) 11...♕h5 12 ♗b2 ♖ae8 with harmonious development.

10 b3 ♕d7 11 ♕d2 ♖ae8 12 ♗b2 ♗d8!

Once again Black finds a function for this bishop: there is a weakness on e3.

13 h3 ♗f7 14 ♔h2 ♗b6 15 ♖ae1 exf4 16 ♘xf4 ♕d8 *(D)*

16...g5!? is risky because after 17 ♘a4 gxf4 18 ♘xb6 fxg3+ 19 ♔h1 axb6 20 ♗xf6 the black king is vulnerable.

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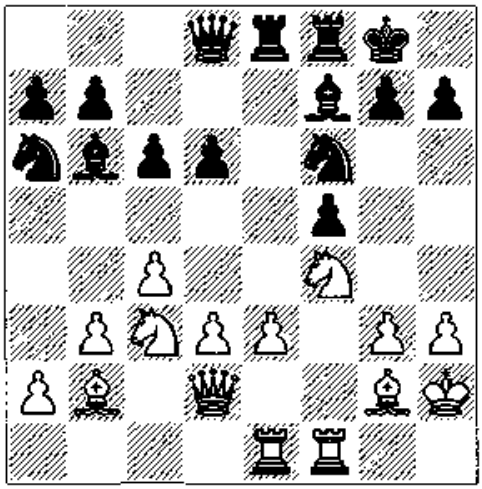


17 e4 fxe4 18 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♗xe4 ♗a5 20 ♗c3 ♗xc3 21 ♕xc3 ♘c5

21...d5!? 22 cxd5 cxd5 23 ♗g2 d4 = doesn't look bad either.

22 ♗g2 ♖xe1 23 ♖xe1 ♖e8 24 d4 ♘e6 25 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 26 ♖xe6 ♗xe6

This ending should be a draw, albeit with a little accuracy needed from Black, Markowski-Seul, Biel 1997.

Conclusion: This slow continuation is solid for White but Black should equalize with our standard, flexible development system.

29 Rare First Moves

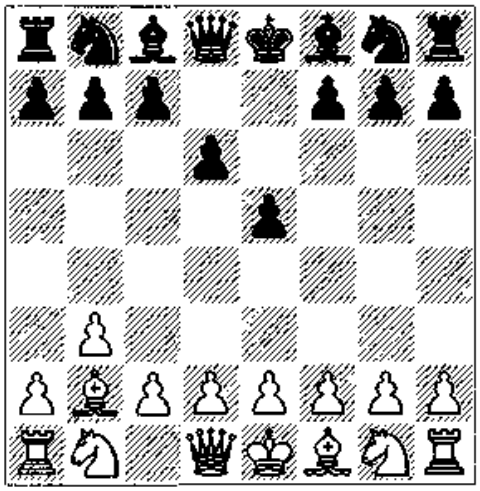
Here we consider:

A: 1 b3	232
B: 1 b4	234
C: 1 f4	235

Instead, 1 g3 d6!? will often transpose to variations considered in the previous two chapters, but here is an independent possibility: 2 ♗g2 e5 3 e4 (3 c4 f5 4 ♘c3 transposes to Chapter 28) 3...♘c6 4 ♘e2 f5!? 5 d4 (5 exf5 helps Black's development: 5...♗xf5 6 0-0 ♘f6 7 d4 ♗e7 8 c3 ♕d7 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♗e3 ♕xd1 11 ♖xd1 ♘g4 ∓ Minich-Franzen, Trnava 1989) 5...fxe4 6 d5 ♘ce7 7 c4 ♘f6 8 ♘bc3 ♗f5 9 h3 h5 10 ♗g5 ♕d7 11 ♕d2 0-0-0 led to a rather unconventional position that is difficult to assess in Mowsziszian-Granados Gomez, Paretana 1999.

A)

1 b3 d6 2 ♗b2 e5 *(D)*



3 e3

Or:

a) 3 c4 f5 4 g3 (4 d4 e4 5 e3 transposes to the main line) 4...♘f6 5 ♗g2 transposes to 'c1'.

b) 3 d4 transposes to Line D of Chapter 19.

c) Against the double fianchetto 3 g3 Black can naturally continue with the standard 3...f5, leading to the following possibilities:

c1) After 4 ♗g2, Black's basic set-up is especially good, and he gets a very active position: 4...♘f6 5 c4 ♗e7 6 e3 c6 7 ♘e2 0-0 8 0-0 ♕e8! (8...♘a6 9 ♘bc3 ♘c7 10 d4 e4 11 d5 c5 12 f3 exf3 13 ♗xf3 ♖b8 14 a4 ♘d7 15 ♗g2 ♘e5 = L.Schneider-Ziegler, Stockholm 1987) 9 d4 e4 10 d5 c5 11 a3 g5 12 ♘d2 ♘bd7 13 ♕c2 ♕h5 14 f3 exf3 15 ♗xf3 ♘g4 16 ♗xg4 ♕xg4 17 ♖f2 ♘e5 ∓ Brunsch-Weisenburger, Baden 1995.

c2) 4 d4 e4 and then:

c21) 5 e3 ♘f6 6 ♘e2 c6 7 ♘f4 d5 8 h4 ♗d6 9 c4 0-0 10 ♘c3 ♗xf4 11 gxf4 ♗e6 12 ♗a3 ♖f7 13 ♕d2 ♘bd7 14 cxd5 ♘xd5 15 ♗d6 ♘7f6 16 ♗e5 ♘xc3 17 ♕xc3 ♘g4 = Hecht-Bilek, Budapest 1973.

c22) 5 d5 ♘f6 and here:

c221) 6 e3?! ♗e7 7 ♘h3 ♘bd7 8 ♘g5 ♘e5 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 h4 ♘fg4 11

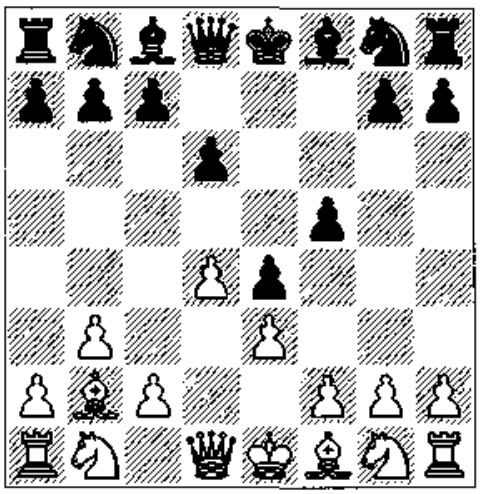
♘h3 ♗f6 12 ♘c3 c5 ∓ Bellon-Bilek, Palma de Mallorca 1972.

c222) 6 ♘h3!? ♘bd7!? (6...g6!? 7 ♘f4 ♗g7 is another plan) 7 ♗g2 ♗e7 8 ♘c3 ♘e5 9 f3 0-0 10 ♕d2 c6 11 ♘f4 exf3 12 exf3 ♖e8 13 0-0-0 ± Kallio-Fogarasi, Budapest 2001.

3...f5

This is also quite a good moment to play in Modern Defence style: 3...g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 d4 e4 6 ♘fd2 f5 7 c4 ♘f6 8 ♘c3 0-0 9 ♕c2 ♘c6 10 ♗e2 ♘b4 11 ♕b1 f4!? (11...c6 12 a3 ♘a6 =) 12 a3 fxe3 13 fxe3 ♘d3+ 14 ♗xd3 exd3 15 0-0 ♘g4 16 ♕xd3 ♕h4 17 h3 ♘f2 with attacking chances for Black, Planinc-Szabo, Amsterdam 1973.

4 d4 e4 *(D)*



This position is again very similar to the 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 main lines, but White has used two moves to develop his bishop at once to b2, which may turn out not to be time well spent if Black manages to play ...d5. This is why in many examples White aims to play d5 first.

5 c4

Other options:

a) 5 ♘e2 ♘f6 6 d5 ♗e7 7 ♘f4 0-0 8 ♘c3 (8 ♗e2 a5 9 0-0 ♘a6 10 c4 ♘c5 11 ♘a3 g5 12 ♘h3 ♘g4 13 ♘b5 ♘e5 ∓ *Mephisto*-Suetin, Dortmund 1990) 8...c6 9 ♗e2 a5 10 ♕d2 ♘a6 11 dxc6 bxc6 12 ♘a4 ♘c7 13 ♗d4 g5 14 ♘h5 ♘xh5 15 ♗xh5 ♘d5 with unclear play, M.Nei-Yrjölä, Helsinki 1995.

b) 5 ♘h3 ♘f6 6 c4 (6 ♘f4 ♗e7 7 h4 c6 8 c4 ♘a6 9 ♘c3 ♘c7 10 ♕d2 ♘e6 11 g3 ♘xf4 12 exf4 d5 ∓ Ashley-Hoang Thanh Trang, Budapest 1997) 6...g6 7 ♘f4 ♗g7 8 h4 0-0 9 ♘c3 ♘c6 10 a3 ♕e7 11 ♖c1 ♘d8 12 b4 ♘e6 = Emodi-Berkovich, Budapest 1992.

c) 5 d5 ♘f6 6 ♘h3 (6 h4 ♗e7 7 ♘h3 0-0 8 ♗e2 ♘bd7 9 ♘c3 a6 10 h5 ♘e5 ½-½ Vokač-Marin, Krynica 1998) 6...c6 7 ♘f4 ♗e7 8 h4 0-0 (8...a5!? 9 a4 ♘a6 10 ♗c4 ♘c7 11 ♘c3 ♘g4 12 ♘h5 ♗xh4 13 ♘xg7+ ♔f8 14 g3 ♗f6 15 ♘h5 ♗e5 16 ♕d2 b5 is unclear, M.Nei-Paasikangas, Espoo 1996) 9 ♘c3 ♔h8 10 ♕d2 ♗d7 11 ♗e2 cxd5 12 ♘cxd5 ♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 ♗c6 14 ♘f4 ♗f6 15 c4 ♗xb2 16 ♕xb2 ♕a5+ 17 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 18 ♔xd2 ♘a6 = Vandevoort-Dal Borgo, Huy 1993.

5...♘f6

Positionally very logical is 5...d5!? 6 ♗a3 (6 cxd5 ♘f6) 6...♗xa3 7 ♘xa3 ♘f6 8 ♕d2 0-0 9 cxd5 ♘xd5 10 ♗c4 ♗e6 11 ♘e2 ♘d7 12 ♖c1 c6 13 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 ½-½ Hug-Knežević, Stary Smokovec 1974.

6 ♘c3 ♗e7 7 ♘ge2

7 ♘h3 ♗e6 (7...c6, with the same plan as in the main line, is certainly possible) 8 ♘f4 ♗f7 9 h4 ♘bd7 10 ♗e2 ♘f8 11 ♕d2 c6?! (it is time to

exchange White's best piece by means of 11...♘g6) 12 d5 c5 13 f3 exf3 14 ♗xf3 ♕d7 15 0-0-0 a6 16 a4 (16 e4! ±) 16...0-0-0 17 ♖de1 ♘g6 18 ♘ce2 ♘e5 19 ♘g3 a5 ½-½ Dorr-Vetemaa, USA 1995.

7...c6 8 ♘f4 ♘a6

Black continues with standard plans, including support for ...d5. If White plays d5 himself, Black will try to create counterplay with ...♘c7 and ...b5.

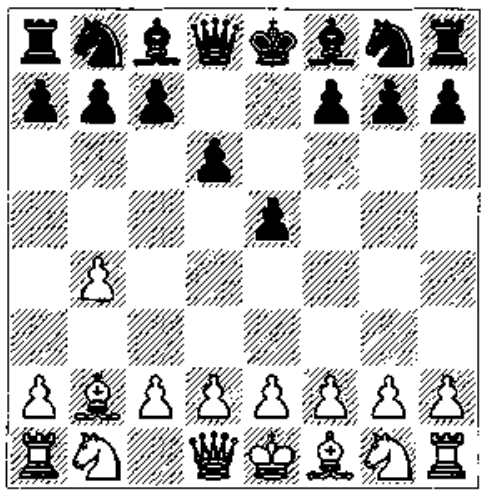
9 d5 0-0 10 ♗e2 ♘c7 11 h4 c5 12 ♕c2 ♖b8 13 h5 a6 14 a4 ♕e8 15 a5 ♗d8

with a level but difficult positional fight, Hodgson-Agrest, Harplinge 1998.

Conclusion: This seems to be a perfectly viable option against 1 b3, especially because this is hardly an approach that Nimzo/Larsen players are likely to be well prepared for.

B)

1 b4 d6 2 ♗b2 e5 *(D)*



Here we follow our basic preferred set-up against the English Opening, namely quick kingside activity with ...d6, ...e5, ...f5, ...♘f6, ...♗e7 and ...0-0.

3 c4

Other moves:

a) 3 f4?! exf4 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 g3!? fxg3 6 hxg3 ♗g4 7 ♗g2 c6 8 d3 ♗e7 9 ♘bd2 ♕c7 10 a3 ♘bd7 ∓ Gross-Zuch, Germany 1988.

b) 3 e3 f5 4 ♘f3 ♘f6 5 d4 e4 6 ♘fd2 d5 7 b5 ♗d6 8 ♗e2 0-0 9 0-0 ♗e6 10 a4 c6 11 ♘a3 ♕c7 12 g3 ♘bd7 13 f4 ♖fc8 ∓ Gernet-Medwed, Wolfstein 1994.

c) 3 e4 f5 4 d3 (4 ♘c3 ♘f6 5 ♗c4 fxe4 6 ♗d5 ♘xd5 7 ♘xd5 c6 8 ♘e3 ♗e6 ∓ Culverhouse-Friesen, Soest 1996; 4 ♗c4 ♘f6 5 f4 fxe4 6 fxe5 ♘g4 7 e6 ♕g5 8 ♘c3 ♘f6 9 ♘ge2 d5 is also much better for Black, Solano-Ugalde, Costa Rica 1997) 4...♘f6 5 ♘d2 g6 6 ♗e2 ♗g7 7 c4 0-0 8 h3 ♘c6 ∓ Rajewski-Eckl, Bad Wörishofen 1992.

3...f5 4 e3 ♘f6 5 ♘f3

5 ♘c3 g6 6 d3 ♗g7 7 ♕b3 0-0 8 ♗e2 c6 9 ♘f3 ♗e6 = Feldman-Burrows, New York 1999.

5...♗e7 6 d4

Or 6 ♘c3 0-0 7 ♕b3 ♔h8 8 d4 e4 9 ♘g5 c6 = with a familiar position-type, Sokolsky-Persitz, corr. 1968.

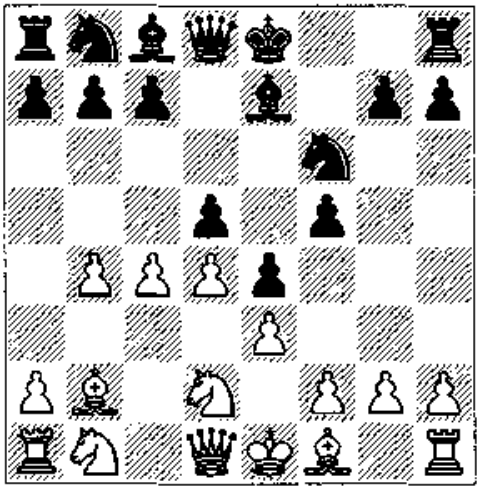
6...e4 7 ♘fd2 d5 *(D)*

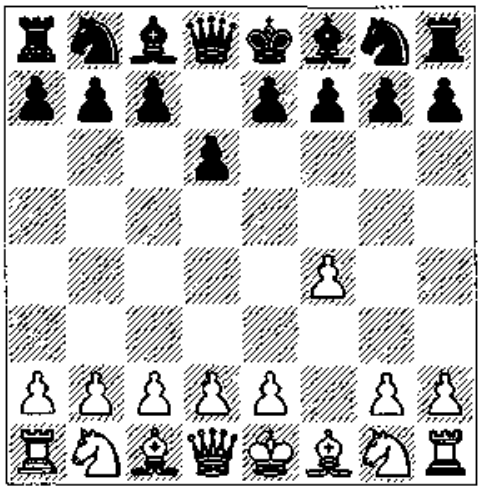
This position is quite similar to 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 main lines, and Black continues applying the ideas that are well known there.

8 b5

Or:

a) 8 ♕b3 c6 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 g3 ♔h8 11 h4 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 b5 13 ♗e2 ♘a6





14 a3 ♘c7 15 ♕c2 ♗e6 ∓ Sokolsky-Suetin, USSR Cht (Leningrad) 1953. This is a nice example of how to gain control of d5.

b) Closing the position with 8 c5 makes life easy for Black: 8...0-0 9 ♘c3 c6 10 a4 ♕c7 11 g3 ♗e6 12 ♘e2 ♘h5 13 ♗g2 ♘d7 with equality, Reuter-Von Oppen, Koblenz 1990.

8...c6 9 a4 0-0 10 ♕b3 ♗e6 11 ♘c3 ♘bd7 12 ♗e2 ♔h8 13 h3 ♕c7 14 c5 f4!? 15 ♘d1

15 ♘cxe4 fxe3 16 fxe3 ♘xe4 17 ♘xe4 b6 is certainly risky for White because of his vulnerable king.

15...♖ab8 16 exf4 ♕xf4 17 g3 ♕h6 18 ♕e3 ♕g6

∓ Roczniak-Walczak, Poland 1981.

Conclusion: Although there are certainly many viable options against the Sokolsky, this is a way to lead the game into familiar position-types.

C)

1 f4 d6 *(D)*

Well, 1...d6 is possible after every first move by White. After 1 f4 it is especially useful, as the plan of ...e5 offers good activity, provided Black avoids transpositions to certain other openings. Especially the King's Gambit Declined (in the form of 1 e4 e5 2 f4 d6) should be avoided without special preparations.

2 ♘f3

Or:

a) Moves like 2 g3 and 2 e3 are effectively met by 2...e5.

b) 2 d4?! transposes to Line A of Chapter 19.

c) After 2 e4 we recommend either:

c1) 2...♘f6 and then:

c11) 3 d3 e5 (3...g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 g3 c5 transposes to a Closed Sicilian) 4 ♘f3 ♘c6 5 g3 exf4 6 ♗xf4 d5! 7 e5 ♘h5 8 ♗g2 ♗g4 9 c3 ♗e7 10 0-0 ♘xf4 11 gxf4 ♕d7 12 d4 ♕f5 13 ♕d2 0-0 14 ♘e1 ♕g6 15 ♘c2 ♗h4 with the plan ...♘e7-f5 leads to an unclear position, Danielsen-J.Andersen, Danish League 1998/9.

c12) 3 ♘c3 g6 4 d4 transposes to the Austrian Attack of the Pirc (Chapter 21).

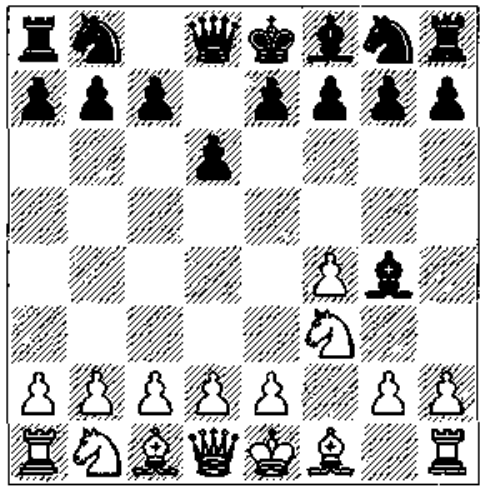
c2) 2...d5!? challenges White's centre at once. The loss of tempo means nothing, as the premature f4 is a weakness in quite a number of theoretical positions. White now has:

c21) 3 exd5?! ♘f6 (3...♕xd5!? is also possible) 4 ♘c3 (4 c4 c6 5 ♘c3 cxd5 6 cxd5 ♘xd5 7 ♘f3 ♘c6 8 ♗c4 e6 9 d4 ♗b4 10 ♗xd5 exd5 11 0-0 0-0 ∓ Montell-Oratovsky, Salou 2000) 4...♘xd5 5 ♕f3 e6 (5...♘xc3!? looks possible) 6 ♗c4 ♘b4 7 ♗b3 ♘8c6 ∓ Mas-Reilly, Genting Highlands 1998.

c22) 3 ♘c3?! dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♘d7 5 ♘f3 ♘gf6 6 ♘f2 e6 7 g3 ♗d6 8 ♗g2 0-0 ∓ Petraki-Djurić, Athens 1997.

c23) 3 e5 c5 4 ♘f3 ♘c6 5 c3 (5 ♘c3 ♗g4 6 ♗b5 e6 7 ♗xc6+ bxc6 8 d3 ♘h6 9 0-0 ♘f5 10 ♕e1 h5 ∓ Danielsen-Skytte, Copenhagen 1999) 5...♗g4 6 h3 ♗xf3 7 ♕xf3 e6 8 d3 f6 9 exf6 ♘xf6 10 ♘a3 ♗d6 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 g4 ♕e7 13 ♗d2 ♖ae8 14 0-0-0 a6 15 ♘c2 b5 with an initiative for Black, Beshukov-T.Ivanov, Novgorod 1999.

2...♗g4!? *(D)*


W

Now we can turn to the ideas of the Hodgson System. Otherwise:

a) After 2...e5!?, 3 fxe5 transposes to a line of the From Gambit, while 3 e4 transposes to a King's Gambit Declined.

b) 2...♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6 4 e4 ♗g7 5 d4 is an Austrian Attack (Chapter 21).

3 e4

White has some alternatives:

a) 3 b3?! ♗xf3 4 exf3 ♘d7 5 ♗b2 ♘gf6 6 ♘a3 g6 7 c4 ♗g7 8 g3 c6 9 ♗h3 e6 10 ♕e2 ♕e7 gives Black a slight advantage, Mashiri-J.M.Nielsen, Copenhagen 1998.

b) 3 g3?! ♗xf3 4 exf3 ♘f6 5 f5 d5 6 d4 c5 7 c3 ♕b6 8 dxc5 ♕xc5 9 ♕d4 ♕xd4 10 cxd4 ♘c6 ∓ Petro-Okhotnik, Sarospatak 1995.

c) 3 e3 e5 4 h3 ♗xf3 5 ♕xf3 c6 6 b3 ♗e7?! (6...exf4 7 exf4 ♘f6 8 ♗b2 d5 = is more accurate) 7 ♗b2 ♗f6 8 fxe5 dxe5 9 ♘c3 ♘d7 10 0-0-0 ♕a5 11 ♔b1 ♘e7 12 ♘e4 ± Klauser-Novoselski, Zurich 1988.

3...e5

In addition to this very logical move, Black has also two fair alternatives:

a) 3...♘d7!? is playable though a little less active: 4 ♗c4 e5 5 ♘c3 ♘gf6 6 0-0 ♗e7 7 d3 0-0 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♕xf3 exf4 10 ♕xf4 c6 11 a3 ♘b6 12 ♗a2 d5 13 exd5 (13 e5!?) 13...♘bxd5 14 ♗xd5 ♘xd5 15 ♕f2 ♗h4 16 ♕f3 ½-½ Mozes-Korpics, Budapest 1992.

b) 3...♘f6!? looks interesting. The idea is to meet 4 ♘c3 with 4...e6 5 d4 (5 h3!?) 5...d5!; for example, 6 e5 ♘e4! 7 ♗d3 ♗b4 8 ♗d2 ♘xd2 9 ♕xd2 ♗xf3 10 gxf3 ♕h4+ 11 ♔e2 c5 with a slight advantage for Black, Le Floch-Okhotnik, Guichen 1993.

4 fxe5

Safer is 4 d3 ♗e7 5 ♗e2 ♘c6 6 0-0 ♘f6 7 ♗e3 0-0 (7...exf4 8 ♗xf4 d5! looks logical) 8 ♘c3 ♗c8!? 9 h3 exf4 10 ♗xf4 d5 11 exd5 (11 ♘xd5! wins a pawn and is unclear) 11...♘b4 12 ♕d2 ♘fxd5 13 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 ∓ Durst-Mahdi, Velden 1996.

4...dxe5 5 ♗c4 ♘c6 6 c3

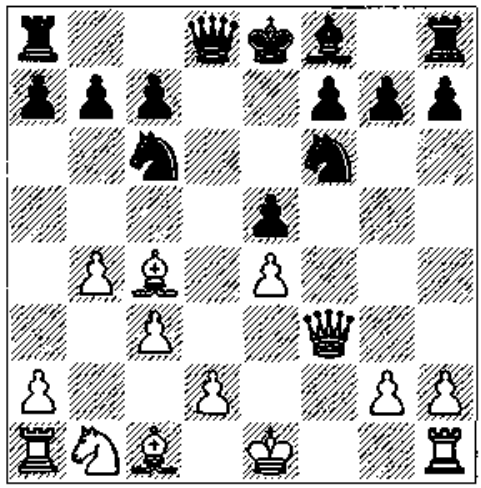
6 0-0? is a tactical mistake due to 6...♗xf3 7 ♗xf7+ (7 ♕xf3 ♕d4+ 8 ♔h1 ♕xc4 −+) 7...♔xf7 8 ♕xf3+ ♘f6 9 ♕b3+ ♔e8 10 ♕xb7 ♘d4 ∓.

6...♗xf3?!

This is hardly necessary, as Black has natural moves such as 6...♗c5 and 6...♕d7 at his disposal.

7 ♕xf3 ♘f6 8 b4? *(D)*

B



Instead of this careless move White should play 8 0-0 ♗c5+ 9 ♔h1 with an equal game.

8...♗xb4! 9 cxb4 ♕d4 10 ♕c3 ♕xe4+ 11 ♔d1

11 ♔f1 ♕f4+ 12 ♔e1 ♕h4+ 13 ♔f1 ♘e4 ∓.

11...♕xg2 12 ♖e1 ♘e4 13 ♕e3 ♘d6

It is understandable Black didn't find 13...♘f2+! 14 ♔c2 ♘xb4+ 15 ♔c3 ♘fd3! −+ in practical play but he retains a huge plus.

14 ♗e2 ♕xh2 15 ♗f3 f6 16 ♗b2 ♕h4

∓ Grimm-M.Hermann, Germany 1996/7.

Conclusion: Against Bird's Opening, the continuation with 1...d6 and 2...♗g4 is interesting but not so well known.

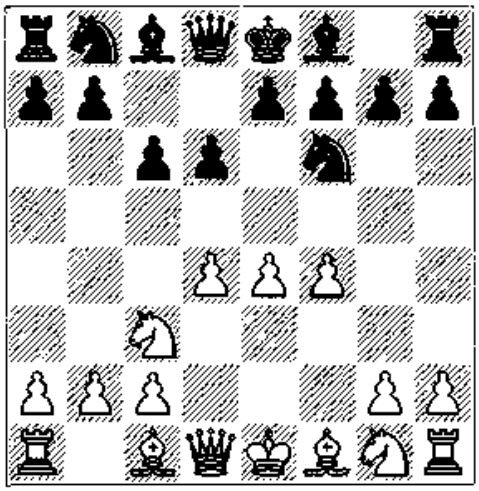
30 Other Options for Black: Introduction

In Chapters 30-33 we study some variations that are closely related to the other material in this book. These variations may overlap partly with the main repertoire introduced earlier, but we think that it might be very useful for the reader to have some extra options. Also some 'lazy' players, not wishing to spend time studying the masses of theory of the Pirc Defence or Hodgson Variation, may find these simpler alternatives very much to their liking.

A Short Word About the Czech System

The Czech System, 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 c6, could be an excellent alternative to the Pirc in our repertoire because after the natural move 4 ♘f3 Black plays 4...♗g4 which will very likely lead to lines in Chapter 15. However, there are some theoretical problems for Black after the aggressive 4 f4 *(D)*:

B



a) 4...♕b6?! became unpopular after the game Leko-Hodgson, Čačak 1996: 5 e5! ♘d5 6 ♘xd5 cxd5 7 ♗d3 g6 8 ♘e2! ♘c6 9 c3 ♗f5 10 ♗xf5 gxf5 11 ♘g3 ±.

b) 4...♕a5 is the thematic reply:

b1) 5 ♗d3 e5 6 ♘f3 and then:

b11) After 6...♗g4 7 ♗e3 ♘bd7 8 0-0 ♗e7 9 h3 Black has an unpleasant choice. The exchange 9...♗xf3 10 ♕xf3 0-0 11 ♘e2! seems to give White the bishop-pair for nothing and after 9...♗h5 10 ♕e1 Black may not have anything better than going in for a similar position with 10...♗xf3 since 10...exf4 11 ♗xf4 ♗g6?! 12 e5! led to unfavourable complications for Black in Browne-Benjamin, USA Ch (Modesto) 1995.

b12) However, the rare 6...exd4 7 ♘xd4 g6 looks more playable and dynamic; for example, 8 ♘f3 ♗g7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♕e1 ♘bd7 11 f5 ♘c5 12 ♕h4 gxf5 13 ♗h6 ♘cxe4 14 ♗xe4 fxe4 15 ♘g5 ♗f5 with complicated play, Sion Castro-Azmaiparashvili, San Roque

1996. Maybe 8 ♘b3 ♕c7 9 0-0 ♗g7 10 a4 is slightly better for White.

b2) Another problem is 5 e5!? ♘e4 6 ♕f3, when 6...♘xc3 7 ♗d2 ♗f5 8 ♗d3 ♗xd3 9 cxd3 ♕d5 10 bxc3 dxe5 11 fxe5 ♕xf3 12 ♘xf3 gave Black an unpleasant ending in Motwani-Adams, Moscow OL 1994. The more complicated possibility 6...d5 7 ♗d3 ♘a6 8 ♘ge2 ♘b4 9 0-0 ♘xc3 10 bxc3 ♘xd3 11 cxd3 g6 still looks good for White, who is better developed and has a strong centre.

All these lines look rather suspicious at the moment but theoretical evaluations tend to change from time to time and some new ideas might make everything look brighter. There is always some surprise value with systems like the Czech, which in fact may be an attractive choice for a creative player.

31 The Old Indian with ...♗f5

In this chapter we study the positions arising after 1 d4 d6 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 ♗f5 (or 3 ♘f3 ♗f5). This variation is a fully playable minor alternative to the main variations presented in this book.

The main idea of the move ...♗f5 is to stop White expanding in the centre with e4, at least for a while. In practice the move ...♗f5 might also trick opponents into King's Indian lines for which they are unprepared, thus offering good practical chances for players who know the basic ideas well. In the critical lines Black usually gains quite active counterplay if White tries to refute the opening directly. White has, of course, many more positional options, but the most he can hope for with them is the normal small opening advantage.

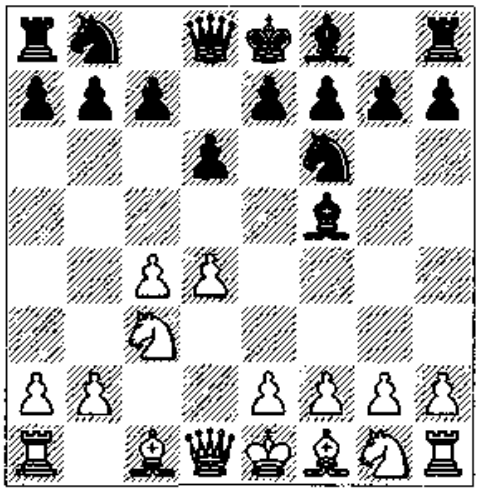
The variation is playable as a separate opening, and in this chapter we have a full repertoire for Black. However, some knowledge of the King's Indian is especially useful, as there are many flexible transpositions to well-known positions. Also in Line C2 there can arise main lines of the Classical King's Indian, but with an extra move (...♗d7) for Black, which offers scope for creative new ideas.

1 d4 d6 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3

3 ♘f3 ♗f5 4 ♘c3 transposes to Line C.

3...♗f5 *(D)*

W



This is the starting position of this variation. Black's last move might appear a bit illogical, as White's e4 may kick the bishop quite badly later on. Black, however, is seeking active counterplay. We now consider:

A: 4 g3 241
B: 4 f3 242
C: 4 ♘f3 247

White has many alternatives, but they are not especially dangerous for Black:

a) 4 ♕b3?!, attacking the b7-pawn, is one of the standard plans for White, and Black must continue actively with 4...♘c6 5 e3 (5 ♘f3 a5 6 d5 ♘b4 7

♘d4 ♗d7 is also a logical variation) 5...a5! 6 a3 (6 ♕xb7 ♘b4 7 ♔d2 c6 leaves the white queen in too much danger) 6...♕c8 7 ♘f3 e5 8 d5 ♘b8 9 ♘h4 ♗g6 (9...♗d7!? is also OK) 10 ♘xg6 hxg6 11 ♕c2 ♘bd7 12 ♖b1 c6 13 e4 ♗e7 14 ♗e2 ♗d8! 15 0-0 ♗b6 and Black is OK, Levit-Multhopp, Chicago 1990.

b) 4 e4?! has been tested a few times but Black should not have any problems: 4...♗xe4 5 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 6 ♕f3 d5 7 ♕b3 e6 8 ♕xb7 ♘d7 9 c5 (9 cxd5 ♖b8 10 ♕c6 ♖b6 11 ♕c2 ♗b4+ 12 ♔d1 exd5 13 ♗d3 0-0 with good compensation, Kargoll-Lenz, Baden-Baden 1990) 9...♖b8 (9...♗e7 10 ♘f3 0-0 11 ♗e2 ♖b8 12 ♕c6 ♘dxc5! 13 dxc5 ♘xc5 14 ♗e3 ♖b6 15 ♕xc5 ♗xc5 16 ♗xc5 ♖xb2 –+ Bonin-Fedorowicz, London Lloyds Bank 1987) 10 ♕c6 ♘xf2! 11 ♘f3 ♘xh1 12 ♗b5, Bode-Flögel, 2nd Bundesliga 1990/1, and now 12...♗e7 should be winning.

c) 4 h3 is possible, intending g4: 4...e5! 5 dxe5 (5 g4 exd4 6 ♕xd4 ♘c6 7 ♕f4 ♗e6 8 ♗g2 ♗e7 9 ♘f3 0-0 was at least equal for Black in Pelikan-Rubinetti, Buenos Aires 1965) 5...dxe5 6 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 is yet another queenless middlegame, but Black should be quite OK after 7 g4 ♗e6 8 ♗g2 c6 9 b3 ♘fd7 10 ♗b2 f6 11 0-0-0 ♔c7 12 ♘f3 a5 13 ♘h4 ♘a6 = Raetsky-Walek, Mlada Boleslav 1992.

d) 4 ♗g5!? ♘bd7 and now:

d1) 5 ♘f3?! is slightly passive, and Black takes the initiative with 5...h6 6 ♗h4 (6 ♗f4 c5 7 d5 g5! 8 ♗g3 ♕a5 9 ♘d2 ♗g7 is slightly better for Black, Müller-Stichlberger, Finkenstein 1992) 6...g5! 7 ♗g3 ♗g7 8 h3 c5 9 d5 ♕b6 10 ♕b3 ♘e4 ∓ Milković-Živković, Bosnjaci 2000.

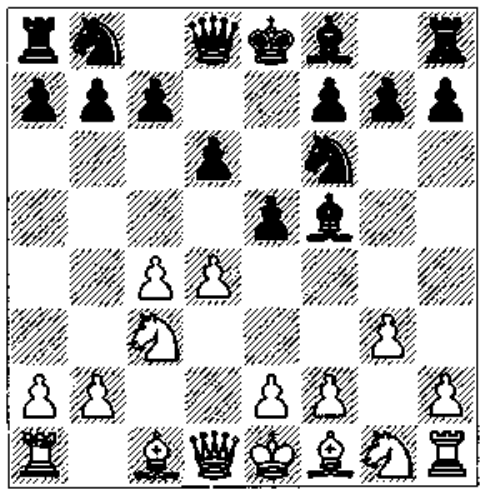
d2) 5 f3 h6 and then:

d21) 6 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 7 e4 is a natural idea to give up the bishop-pair in exchange for a couple of moves, but Black seems to be OK after 7...♗h7 8 e5!? (8 ♘ge2 e5 =) 8...dxe5 9 dxe5 ♕xd1+ (9...♘d7 10 e6 is unclear) 10 ♖xd1 ♘d7 11 ♘b5 0-0-0 12 ♘xa7+ ♔b8 13 ♘b5 e6, when Black has the initiative.

d22) After 6 e4 hxg5 7 exf5 the curious pawn-structure gives Black sufficient targets to obtain counterplay: 7...c6 8 g4 e6 9 fxe6 ♕e7 10 ♕e2 fxe6 11 ♕e3 0-0-0 ½-½ Appleberry-Gheorghiu, Ventura 1971.

A)

4 g3 e5! *(D)*



W

5 ♗g2

5 ♘f3 leads to a slightly different position-type where the centre remains closed: 5...♘c6 6 d5 ♘e7 7 ♗g5 (7 ♗g2 ♘e4 8 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 9 ♕b3 ♕c8 =

Obodchuk-Bielczyk, Hlohovec 1993) 7...♘g6 8 e4 ♗d7 9 h4 h6 10 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 11 h5 ♘e7 12 ♘b5 ♔d8 13 ♗h3 ♗xh3 14 ♖xh3 ♘c8 = Hort-Kavalek, Bugojno 1980.

5...♘c6

5...exd4!? is worth noting, as in every forcing variation there can be a forcing refutation: 6 ♗xb7! is the only move for White and now 6...dxc3 7 ♗xa8 is a mess, in which Black's only try so far was not a success, but there might be room for a tactical novelty here: 7...c6 (7...cxb2 8 ♗xb2 c6 9 ♕a4 ± is not good, but 7...c2!? might be possible) 8 bxc3 ♘fd7 9 ♕a4 ♕c7 10 ♗e3 ♘c5 11 ♗xc5 dxc5 12 f3 h5 (12...♗d6!?) 13 e4 ♗c8 14 ♘e2 ♖h6 15 ♖b1 ♘d7 16 ♗b7! +– Mozetić-P.Kovačević, Yugoslav Cht (Tivat) 1995.

6 d5 ♘d4 7 e4 ♗g4

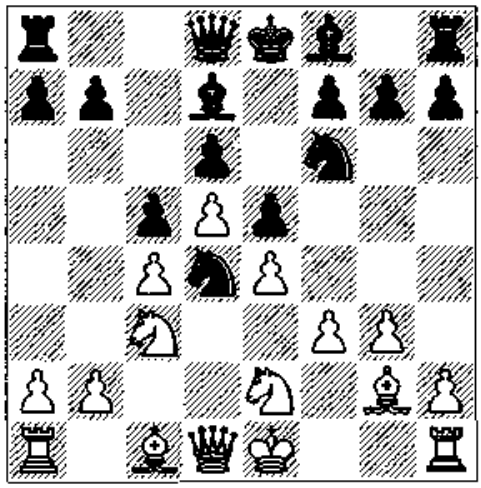
It is useful for Black to block the long diagonal in front of the g2-bishop, because 7...♗d7 8 ♘ge2 ♗g4 9 h3 gives White a small advantage.

8 f3 ♗d7 9 ♘ge2 c5! *(D)*

Black gets either a good central post for his knight, or in case of an *en passant* capture, enough activity on the queenside. Instead 9...♘xe2 10 ♕xe2 ♗e7 11 f4 c6 12 f5! was clearly better for White in Andruet-Benoit, Val Maubuée 1990.

10 dxc6 ♘xc6 11 ♗e3 ♗e7 12 0-0 0-0

This is the critical position. Black has had no special problems in the games played so far, but there are some interesting ideas for White that need further testing. Worse is 12...a6



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13 a4 (13 a3 ♘a5 14 b3 b5 with counterplay) 13...0-0 14 g4! ♘a5 15 b3 with an advantage for White.

Now (after 12...0-0):

a) 13 ♕d2 a6 14 ♖fd1 ♘a5 15 b3 b5 gives Black good counterplay, Piket-Sokolov, Amsterdam 1996.

b) 13 g4!? is a suggested improvement.

c) 13 ♘d5!? ♘xd5 14 exd5 (14 cxd5!? ♘a5 seems to be an improvement, as 15 b3 ± leaves the a5-knight quite badly placed) 14...♘b8 15 b4 a5 16 a3 ♗g5!? 17 f4 ♗f6 18 fxe5 ♗xe5 19 ♗d4 ♕e7 = Norri-Yrjölä, Finnish Cht 2001.

Conclusion: 4 g3 is not especially dangerous for Black. However, our main line here has not been played much, so there is still room for new ideas.

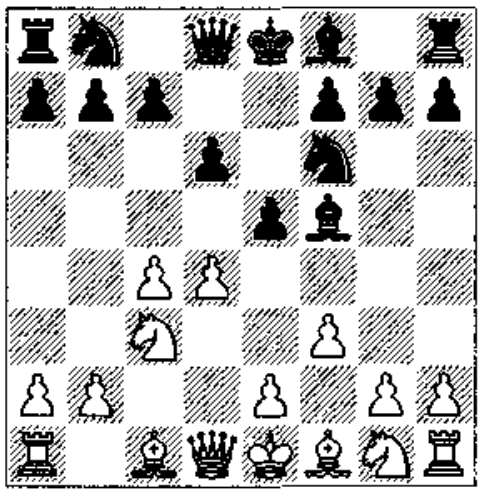
B)

4 f3

White's most natural plan is to play e4 at once, supporting it with f3. Black's f5-bishop would look quite

stupid were it not for the following tactical operation:

4...e5! *(D)*



This is the only move for Black. White now achieves the e4 advance, but Black can insert ...exd4 to mix things up.

5 e4

Otherwise:

a) White can also go for the endgame again, but it is OK for Black: 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 ♕xd8+ (6 ♕b3 is harmless: 6...♕c8 7 e4 ♗e6 8 ♗d3 ♘bd7 9 ♗e3 c6 10 ♕c2 ♗c5 11 ♕f2 b6 12 ♘ge2 0-0 13 0-0 ♗xe3 14 ♕xe3 ♘c5 15 b3 ♖d8 16 ♗c2 ♕c7 ∓ Buck-Berger, Finkenstein 1996) 6...♔xd8 7 e4 (7 ♗g5 is illogical, as the exchange on f6 just strengthens Black's centre; for example, 7...c6 8 0-0-0+ ♔c7 9 g3 ♗e6 10 b3 ♗c5 = Visier-Tal, Palma de Mallorca 1966) 7...♗e6 and then:

a1) 8 ♗g5!? c6 9 0-0-0+ ♔c7 10 f4! meets the demands of the position well, but 10...♗c5 11 f5 ♗c8 12 h3 ♘bd7 13 ♘f3 ♖e8 14 ♗e2 a5, Paroulek-Kubanek, Podebrady 1936, is playable for Black, though White has some initiative with 15 g4!?.

a2) 8 ♘d5 ♘fd7! 9 g3 c6 10 ♘e3 ♗b4+ 11 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12 ♔xd2 f6 = Dermann-Möhring, Eger 1988.

a3) 8 ♗e3 c6 and here:

a31) 9 a3 ♘bd7 10 ♖d1 ♔c7 11 b4 ♘b6! 12 c5 ♘c4 13 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 14 ♘ge2 ♗e7 15 ♔f2 ♖hd8 ∓ Wittke-Kountz, Badenweil 1988.

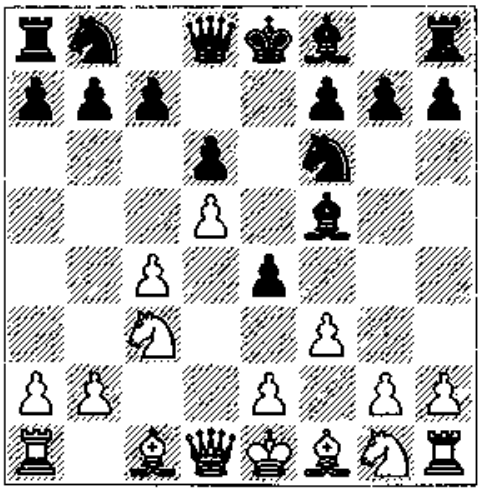
a32) 9 c5!? ♘bd7 10 ♘a4 ♔c7 11 b3 b5! 12 cxb6+ axb6 13 ♖c1 ♔b7 14 ♖c2 b5 15 ♘c3 ♗b4 ∓ Kovacs-Gyurkovics, Hungarian Cht 1993.

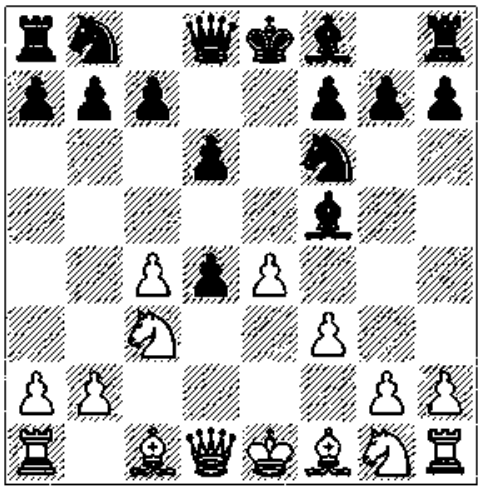
a33) 9 0-0-0+ ♔c7 and this endgame is quite pleasant for Black, and closely reminiscent of the positions arising after 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5. The king is safe at c7, and Black's pieces can easily find some good squares. For example: 10 g3 ♘a6 11 ♘a4 ♘d7 12 ♗h3 ♘dc5 13 ♗xe6 ♘xe6 14 ♘e2 ♘ac5 15 ♘ac3 g6 16 ♖d2 a5! ∓ Mickiewicz-Bielczyk, Polish Cht (Suwalki) 1999.

b) 5 d5 closes the centre, attempting to deny Black any counterplay. Black's best try is the thematic counter 5...e4! *(D)*, when White has a choice:

b1) 6 ♗g5 wins the centre for White, but Black gets counterplay after 6...exf3 7 gxf3 ♗e7 8 e4 ♗g6 9 h4 h6 10 ♗e3 ♘bd7 11 ♕d2 ♘h5 because of the weakened dark squares; for example, 12 ♗f2 ♗f6 13 ♘ge2 ♘e5 14 ♘d4 ♗h7 15 ♗e2 g5 16 hxg5 ♗xg5 17 ♗e3 ♗h4+ 18 ♗f2 ♗g5 19 ♗e3 ♗h4+ ½-½ Doncheva-Shikova, Bankia 1992.

b2) 6 g4 seems to be a forced draw: 6...♘xg4 7 fxg4 ♕h4+ 8 ♔d2 e3+ 9





♔xe3 ♕g5+ ½-½ Ulybin-Anand, Prestwich 1990. Neither side has a good way to deviate. If White's king advances, it will be mated.

b3) After 6 ♕d4 Black has many playable moves:

b31) 6...♗g6!? 7 ♘h3 ♘a6 8 fxe4 leads to a position where White's extra pawn is of no importance, as it remains a good target for the well-developed black pieces: 8...♘b4 (8...c5!? 9 dxc6 ♘b4 10 ♕d1 ♘xc6 gives Black compensation because of White's weak doubled pawns) 9 ♕d1 a5 10 ♘f2 ♗e7 11 g3 ♘d7 12 ♗g2 ♗f6 13 ♗d2 h5 14 ♖b1 ♘e5, Van der Werf-Vl.Georgiev, Andorra 1997.

b32) 6...c5!? 7 ♕f2 ♗e7 is also possible, with an unclear position.

b33) 6...exf3 7 gxf3 c5 8 ♕f2 ♗e7 9 h4 0-0 10 e4 ♗d7 11 ♗d3 b5 12 ♘ge2 (12 ♘xb5!?) 12...bxc4 13 ♗xc4 ♗c8 14 ♗g5 ♘bd7 15 ♘f4 ♘e5 16 ♗e2 ♖b8 17 0-0-0 ♕b6 18 ♖d2 ♗a6 19 ♖g1 ♗xe2 20 ♕xe2 c4 gives Black a slight advantage, Videki-Bernard, Cannes 1989.

5...exd4 *(D)*

This is the point. Black now obtains quite attractive play based on his active pieces.

6 ♕xd4

Now Black can gain time on the white queen. Other moves:

a) 6 ♘d5!? is best answered by 6...♗g6!? 7 ♕xd4 ♗e7, when White should probably play something other than 8 ♘xe7?! as Black gets too much activity with 8...♕xe7 9 ♗g5 ♘c6 10 ♕d2 h6 11 ♗e3 0-0 12 ♘h3 ♖ae8 13 0-0-0? ♘xe4! ∓ Schüssler-Keene, Skara Echt 1980.

b) 6 ♘b5 ♗d7 7 ♘xd4 and now:

b1) Black can also try to get to the Sämisch King's Indian with 7...g6; for example, 8 ♘ge2 ♗g7 9 ♘c3 0-0 10 ♗e2 ♘c6 11 ♗e3 ♘xd4 12 ♗xd4 ♘h5 13 0-0 ♗xd4+ 14 ♕xd4 ♕g5 15 f4 ♘xf4 16 ♖xf4 ♕xf4 17 ♘d5 ♕e5 18 ♕xe5 dxe5 19 ♘f6+ ♔g7 20 ♘xd7 ♖fe8 = Bodiroga-Jović, Kragujevac 2000.

b2) 7...♘c6 8 ♘ge2 ♗e7 9 ♗e3 0-0 and now Black seems to have at least an equal position, but this is not a big surprise as all his moves have been

normal developing moves. White has a choice:

b21) 10 ♘c3 ♘xd4 (10...♘h5!?) 11 ♗xd4 ♗e6 12 ♗e2 ♘d7 is equal, with the plan ...♗f6 to weaken White's dark squares.

b22) 10 ♘xc6 bxc6 (10...♗xc6? 11 ♘d4 ♗d7 12 ♗d3 ♖e8 13 0-0 c5 14 ♘e2 ♗c6 15 ♘c3 ± Houdart-Callens, Antwerp 1997) 11 ♘c3 ♖e8 is also equal, as the doubled pawns control the centre very well.

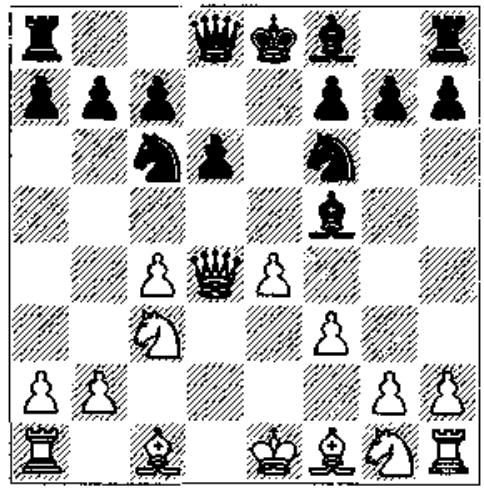
b23) 10 ♘f4 ♖e8 11 ♗e2 ♘e5 12 0-0 c6 13 ♖c1 ♗f8 14 ♕d2 a5 and now:

b231) 15 ♖fd1?! and now Black can seize the initiative with a thematic central break: 15...d5! 16 exd5 (16 cxd5 cxd5 17 ♘b5 dxe4 18 ♘c7 exf3 19 ♘xe8 ♕xe8 20 gxf3 ♗c6∓) 16...cxd5 17 ♘xd5 (17 c5 a4 18 ♘b5 ♗c6 19 ♗d4 ♕d7 is the last playable option for White) 17...♘xd5 18 cxd5 ♗b4 19 ♕c2 ♘xf3+ 20 ♗xf3 ♖xe3 ∓ Feige-Tella, Augsburg 2001.

b232) The careful 15 ♗f2 is White's best, reaching a typical position. After 15...♕c7 16 ♖fd1 ♖ad8 17 ♗g3 ♗c8 = all the black pieces stand very well.

6...♘c6 *(D)*

6...♗e6 7 b3 (7 f4 g6 8 ♗e3 ♘c6 9 ♕d3 ♘g4 10 ♗d2 ♘b4 11 ♕b1 ♗g7 12 ♘f3 c6 13 h3 ♘f6 14 a3 ♘a6 15 ♕c2 0-0 16 f5 ♗d7 17 g4 ♘c5 18 0-0-0 ♖e8 was unclear in Portisch-Christiansen, Szirak IZ 1987; 7 ♗d3 ♘c6 8 ♕e3 ♘b4 9 ♘d5 ♘xd3+ 10 ♕xd3 ♘d7 11 ♕c2 g6 12 ♗d2 ♗g7 13 ♗c3 ♗xc3+ 14 ♕xc3 0-0 15 ♘e2 ± Balashov-Tal, Moscow 1971) 7...♘c6 8 ♕d2 transposes to the main line.



7 ♕d2

This is the main line of the ♘c3 and f3 variation. White has lost a move with his queen, but Black must give this tempo back with his bishop. However, the white queen has committed itself to d2, blocking the c1-bishop.

White has another option, namely 7 ♕f2!? ♗e6:

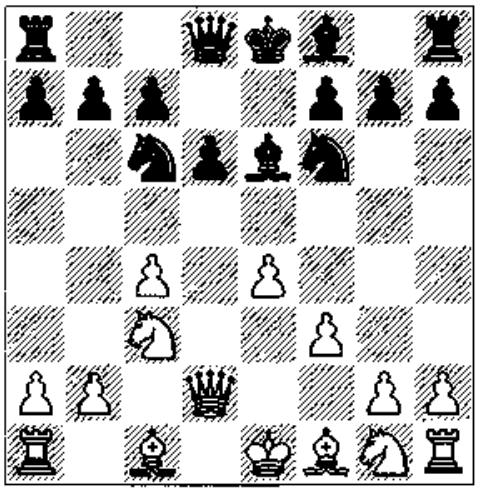
a) 8 b3 g6 9 ♗b2 ♗g7 10 ♖d1 ♕e7 11 ♗d3 0-0 12 ♗b1 a5 13 ♘d5 ♗xd5 14 cxd5 ♘b4 15 ♕e2 (15 ♘e2, as played in Ganbold-Bayarsaihan, Erdenet 1994, may be met by 15...♘xe4 ∓) 15...♘h5 gives Black enough activity.

b) 8 ♘d5!? ♗e7 9 ♘e2 0-0 10 ♘g3 ♘e5 (10...♖e8!? seems pretty natural) 11 ♗e2 c6 12 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 13 f4 (13 0-0 ♘xc4 14 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 15 ♘f5 ♕e5 16 ♗e3 c5 17 ♖fd1 ♖fd8 is slightly better for Black, Kerpf-Lenz, 2nd Bundesliga 1988/9) 13...♘eg4 14 ♕d4 ♖fd8 15 0-0 ±.

c) 8 ♗e3 (planning to castle queenside) 8...♗e7 (8...♘e5!?) 9 0-0-0!? 0-0 10 ♔b1 a6 11 g4 ♘e5 12 ♘d5 (12 c5!? is unclear) 12...b5 13 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 14 c5 ♖fd8 15 cxd6 ♖xd6 16 ♖xd6 ♕xd6

17 ♗e2 ♗c4 18 ♘h3 ♘d3 19 ♗xd3 ♕xd3+ 20 ♔a1 ♖d8 ∓ Johannes-Meulders, Antwerp 1997.

7...♗e6 *(D)*



This is the critical variation after 3...♗f5 4 f3, but Black also has an active position here.

8 b3

8 ♗d3 ♘e5 (8...g6!? will probably transpose to the main line) 9 b3 ♘xd3+ 10 ♕xd3 ♗e7 11 ♘ge2 0-0 12 0-0 c6 13 ♗b2 ♕b6+ 14 ♔h1 ♖ad8 (another idea is 14...♘d7!?) 15 ♖ad1 ♕c7 16 f4 a6 17 f5 ♗c8 18 ♕g3 b5 with an equal position, Levin-Radovici, Romanian Cht 1994.

8...g6 9 ♗b2

9 ♘ge2 ♗g7 10 ♗b2 0-0 11 h4!? (11 g3 ♘e5 12 ♗g2 ♗h3 13 0-0 ♗xg2 14 ♔xg2 a6 15 ♖ad1 b5 16 ♘d5 bxc4 17 ♗xe5 dxe5 18 bxc4 c6 19 ♘dc3 ♕a5 = Chabanon-J.Ivanov, Escaldes Z 1999) 11...a5 12 h5 ♘xh5 13 g4 ♘e5 14 ♗g2 ♘f6 15 ♘f4 ♗xc4 16 bxc4 ♘xc4 17 ♕e2 ♘xb2 18 ♕xb2 b5 19 ♕c1 b4 20 ♘ce2 d5 and the strong g7-bishop together with the exposed white king give Black enough activity, Maksimović-Petrović, Novi Sad 1996.

9...♗g7 10 ♗d3

10 ♘ge2 0-0 11 ♘g3 is best met by the active 11...h5! 12 ♗e2 h4, when White's pieces can't get to their best squares in the centre: 13 ♘f1 a5 (or 13...♘d7 14 ♘d5 ♗xb2 15 ♕xb2 a5 16 ♘fe3 ♘b4 17 ♖d1 ♗xd5 18 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 19 ♖xd5 ♘f6 20 ♖d1 ♘h5 21 ♕d2 ♕f6 22 0-0 ♘f4 23 g3 hxg3 24 hxg3 ♘xe2+ 25 ♕xe2 ♖fe8 = Kouatly-Fedorowicz, Brussels 1987) 14 ♘e3 ♗h6 15 ♘cd5 ♗xd5 16 cxd5 ♘e5 17 g3 ♖e8 18 ♕c3 c6 19 dxc6 ♖c8 20 ♕d4 ♖xc6 with a slight advantage for Black, Azmaiparashvili-Vasiukov, USSR 1981.

10...0-0 11 ♘ge2 a5!

ECO gives 11...a6 12 0-0 ♘e5 13 ♖ad1 ♘xd3 (13...♕b8 ± Krogius) 14 ♕xd3 ± Krogius-Suba, Sochi 1977, as Black has exchanged his active knight for the worse of White's bishops. The text-move seems to have more point.

12 0-0 ♘d7

12...♘e5!? 13 ♖ad1 a4 14 ♘d4 axb3 15 axb3 ♘h5 16 f4 ♘c6 17 ♘xc6 bxc6 18 ♘a4 ♕b8 19 ♗xg7 ♘xg7 20 ♗c2 f5 is also possible, Garcia Palermo-Lebredo, Bayamo 1983.

13 ♖ad1 ♘c5

Black has developed his pieces well, and his active minor pieces neutralize White's slight space advantage. The plan ...a4xb3 gives him good activity. The rest of the instructive game Tella-Ubilava, Benasque 1997 was 14 ♘f4 a4 15 ♘cd5 ♘e5 16 ♗xe5 dxe5 17 ♘xe6 fxe6 18 ♘e3 axb3 19 axb3 ♕d4

20 b4 ♘a4 21 ♖f2 ♗h6 22 ♘c2 ♗xd2 23 ♘xd4 ♗e3 24 ♘xe6 ♘b2 0-1.

Conclusion: 4 f3 is best met by active queenside counterplay, similar to that frequently seen in the King's Indian. The 5th move alternatives 5 dxe5 and 5 d5 lead to roughly equal play.

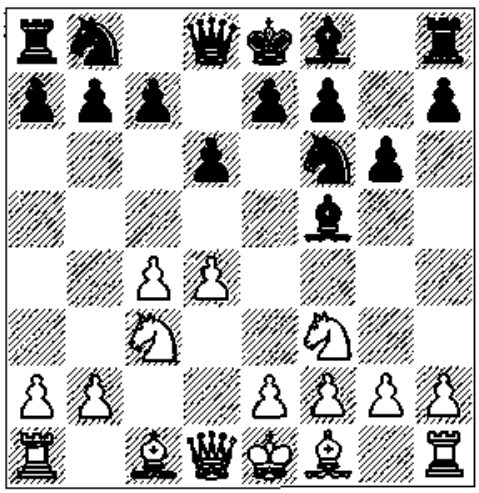
C)

4 ♘f3

This move, simply developing a piece, seems to be White's strongest option, as Black's plans here are not so clear as in Lines A and B. Of course one should note that the positions in this line can also be reached via 3 ♘f3 (or indeed 1 ♘f3).

4...g6 *(D)*

W



This is Black's best option, aiming for a set-up similar to a King's Indian. The other possibility is to go for an Old Indian-type position with ...♘bd7, ...e5, ...♗e7 and ...c6, but this allows White to play e4 and obtain a small advantage.

Now:

C1: 5 g3 249
C2: 5 ♘h4 251

The latter is the line most likely to give Black problems, and is also the most frequently played.

White has a variety of other moves, some of which are quite important:

a) 5 ♗g5 ♘e4 6 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 7 ♕b3 (7 ♘d2!? ±) 7...b6 8 ♕e3 ♗b7 9 ♗h6 ♘d7 10 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 11 g3 ♔g7 12 ♗g2 e5 13 dxe5 ♘xe5 14 0-0 ♖e8 15 ♕c3 ♕f6 16 ♘e1 ♗xg2 17 ♘xg2 ♘d7 18 ♕c2 ♕e5 19 ♘f4 ♘f6 = Hölzl-Blatny, Klagenfurt 1997.

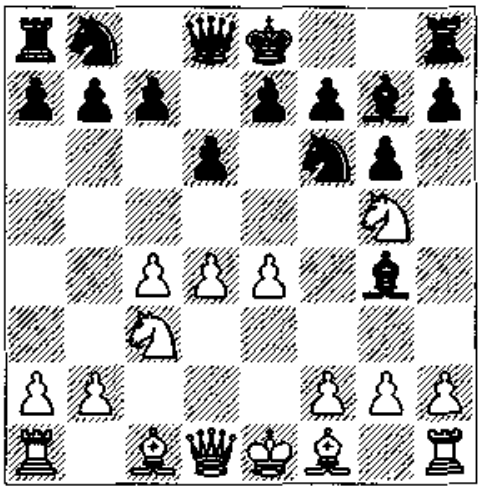
b) 5 e3 ♘e4 6 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 7 ♗e2 (7 ♕b3 b6 8 d5 ♗g7 9 ♘g5 ♗f5 10 e4 ♗d7 11 f4 ♘a6 12 ♗d2 ♘c5 13 ♕c2 0-0 14 ♗c3 ♗xc3+ 15 bxc3 e5 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 g3 e5 ∓ Breutigam-Bosch, Amstelveen 1994) 7...♗g7 8 0-0 0-0 9 b3 e5 10 dxe5 ♘c6 11 ♗b2 dxe5 12 ♕c1 ♖e8 13 ♕c3 ♕e7 14 ♘d2 ♗f5 15 ♗f3 ♗d7 16 a3 f5 = Rogers-Mestel, British Ch (Swansea) 1987.

c) 5 ♘d2 ♗g7 (5...e5!?; 5...♗h6!?) 6 e4 ♗g4 7 f3 ♗d7 8 ♘b3 a5! 9 ♗e3 a4 10 ♘c1 0-0 11 ♗d3 a3 12 b3 c5 13 ♘1e2 ♘c6 14 ♗c2 ♕a5 15 ♕d2 e5 16 dxc5 dxc5 17 ♘d5 ♘xd5 18 ♕xa5 ♘xe3! 19 ♕c3 ♘d4 and the strong black knights compensate for the sacrificed material, Kobylkin-Tseshkovsky, Krasnodar 1999.

d) 5 h3!? ♗g7 (5...♘e4!?) 6 g4 ♗c8 7 e4 c5 8 d5 e6 9 ♗e3 0-0 10 ♘d2 (10 ♗d3 exd5 11 exd5 ♘e8 12 ♕d2 ♘d7 13 ♗g5 f6 14 ♗e3 f5 15 gxf5 ♘b6 was unclear in Yusupov-Dizdarević, Dresden Z 1998) 10...♖e8 11 ♗e2 ♘a6 12 0-0 ♘c7 13 a4 exd5 14 cxd5

h5 15 ♗f4 hxg4 16 hxg4 ♘h7 17 ♗g3 ♘g5 18 ♔g2 f5 19 exf5 gxf5 20 ♘c4 ♗xc3 21 bxc3 ♘e4 and the active pieces compensate for the weakened king, Kožuł-Benjamin, Toronto 1990.

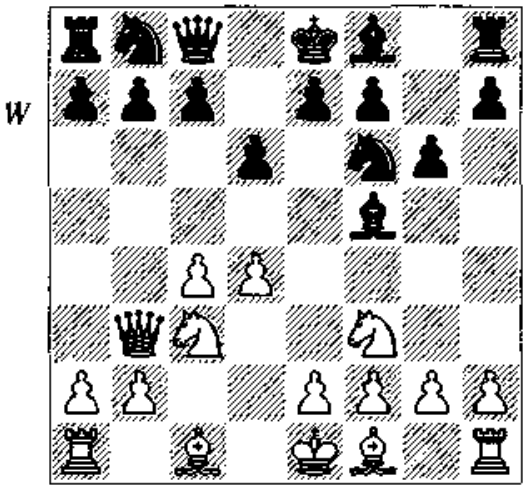
e) 5 ♘g5!? ♗g7 (5...♗d7!?) 6 e4 ♗g4 *(D)* and now:



e1) 7 ♗e2 ♗xe2 8 ♕xe2 ♘c6 9 d5 (9 e5 ♘xd4 10 exf6 ♘xe2 11 fxg7 ♖g8 12 ♔xe2 ♖xg7 ∓ Bonin-Shirazi, New York 1991) 9...♘d4 10 ♕d1 c5 11 ♘f3 ♘d7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♘xd4 cxd4 14 ♘e2 ♕b6 15 ♖b1 ♖fc8 16 b3 ♖xc4 17 ♗b2 ♖b4 18 ♔h1 d3 ∓ Zaltsman-Shirazi, New York 1991.

e2) 7 f3 ♗d7 8 e5! (8 f4 e5 9 fxe5 dxe5 10 d5 {10 dxe5 ♘g4 11 ♕d5 ♘xe5 12 ♕xb7 ♗c6 gives Black compensation} 10...c6 11 ♗e2 0-0 12 0-0 ♘a6 is at least OK for Black, Lputian-Dizdarević, Sarajevo 1998) is critical, but Black can try 8...♘g8 9 f4 dxe5 10 fxe5 f6!? with some counterplay.

f) 5 ♕b3!? ♕c8 *(D)* and White has tried almost everything here:



f1) 6 ♘h4 ♗d7 7 e4 ♘c6 8 d5 should give Black counterplay because of the white knight on h4 and the weakened dark squares in the centre: 8...♘d8 (8...♘d4!?) 9 ♗e2 ♗g7 10 h3 0-0 11 ♗e3 e6 12 ♖d1 b6 13 ♕c2 ♘b7 14 g4 c6 is OK for Black, Tratar-Luciani, Nova Gorica 2000.

f2) 6 h3 ♗g7 7 g4 is an interesting extended fianchetto, but White is also weakening his own position: 7...♗d7 8 ♗g2 ♘c6 9 ♕d1 e5 10 d5 ♘e7 11 ♗e3 b6 12 ♕d2 h5! with counterplay, Daloz-Blatny, Corsica rpd 1997.

f3) 6 ♗g5 ♗g7 7 e3 h6 8 ♗h4 is again best met by the thematic 8...g5! 9 ♗g3 ♘h5 10 ♗e2 ♘d7 11 ♕d1 e6 12 0-0 ♗g6 13 ♘e1 ♘xg3 14 fxg3 0-0 15 g4 c5 ∓ Meister-Hickl, Bundesliga 1988/9.

f4) 6 e3 ♗g7 7 ♗e2 0-0 8 ♘d2 e5 9 d5 a5 10 e4 ♗d7 is a King's Indian-type closed position, but the white pieces are not ideally posted and Black has counterplay: 11 ♕c2 ♘a6 12 ♘f1 ♘e8 13 ♗e3 f5 14 f3 ♘f6 15 ♘d2 b6 16 a3 ♘c5 = Campos-Morales, Gran Canaria 1989.

f5) 6 g3 ♗g7 7 ♗g2 ♘c6 8 d5 ♘d8 9 0-0 0-0 and Black controls e4 and

the h3-c8 diagonal, and this gives him typical counterplay against all White's options:

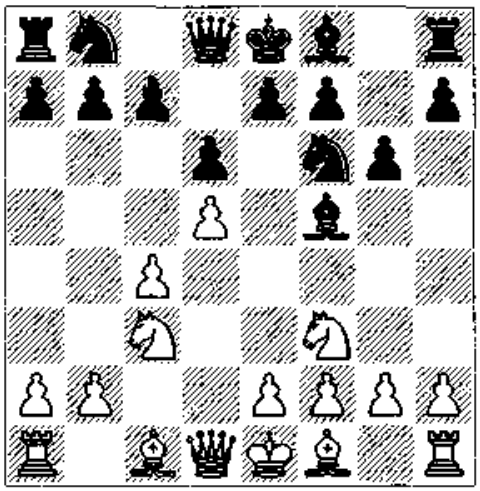
f51) 10 ♗d2 ♘e4! 11 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 12 ♕e3 f5 13 ♗c3 ♗xc3 14 ♕xc3 e5 = .

f52) 10 ♗e3 ♗h3 11 c5 ♗xg2 12 ♔xg2 ♕d7 13 h3 dxc5 14 ♗xc5 b6 15 ♗d4 c5! 16 ♗e5 ♘b7 = Epishin-Bauer, Bad Zwesten 1997.

f53) 10 ♖e1 ♘e4! 11 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 12 ♕e3 f5 13 ♗h3 e6 14 ♕b3 c6 15 dxe6 ♘xe6 16 ♗e3 d5 17 ♘d2 dxc4 18 ♘xc4 ♗d5 19 ♗g2 f4!? with active play for Black, Krasenkow-Romanishin, Cutro 1999.

g) White can also try to close the centre immediately with 5 d5 *(D)*, when Black can choose the position-type he wishes to have:

B



g1) 5...♘a6!? is the latest example, in line with King's Indian fashion: 6 ♘d4 ♗d7 7 e4 ♘c5 8 f3 ♗g7 9 ♗e3 0-0 10 ♗e2 (10 b4 ♘a6 11 a3 c5 12 dxc6 bxc6 with counterplay) 10...e5 11 ♘b3 b6 12 ♕d2 ♘h5 (12...a5!?) 13 g3 f5 14 exf5 gxf5 15 f4 ♕e8 16 fxe5 (16 ♘xc5 bxc5 17 fxe5 ±) 16...♘xb3 17 axb3 dxe5 18 0-0-0 ♘f6 19 ♗h6 ♗xh6 20 ♕xh6 ♕g6 21 ♕e3 ♖ae8 with chances for both players, Ftačnik-Conquest, Hastings 2000/1.

g2) 5...♗g7 6 ♘d4 ♗d7 7 e4 and now:

g21) 7...♘a6 8 ♗e2 ♘c5 9 f3 a5 secures the c5-post for the knight in the spirit of the Classical King's Indian: 10 ♗e3 0-0 11 0-0 c6 12 ♖c1 a4 13 ♕d2 ♕a5 14 ♖fd1 ♖fc8 15 ♗f1 ± Cebalo-Dizdarević, Solin 1999, though Black is not completely out of chances here.

g22) 7...c5 closes the centre in Benoni fashion: 8 ♘c2 0-0 9 ♗e2 a6 (9...♘a6 10 0-0 ♘c7 11 f4 a6 12 a4 b6 13 ♕e1 ±; 9...b5 10 cxb5 a6 11 bxa6 ♘xa6 12 0-0 ♕a5 ±) 10 a4 ♘e8 11 ♗g5 is slightly better for White, Ftačnik-Stratil, Czech Cht 1994.

g23) 7...0-0 8 ♗e2 e6 (8...c5!?) 9 ♗g5 (9 dxe6!?) 9...h6 10 ♗h4 exd5 11 cxd5 ♖e8 12 f3 c5 13 ♘b3 a6 14 a4 b6 15 ♘d2 ♗c8 16 ♘c4 ♖a7 17 0-0 ♖b7 18 ♔h1 g5 19 ♗f2 ± Polugaevsky-Gurgenidze, USSR Ch (Baku) 1961. White has a normal Benoni-type position, with a small advantage, but Black has counterplay.

C1)

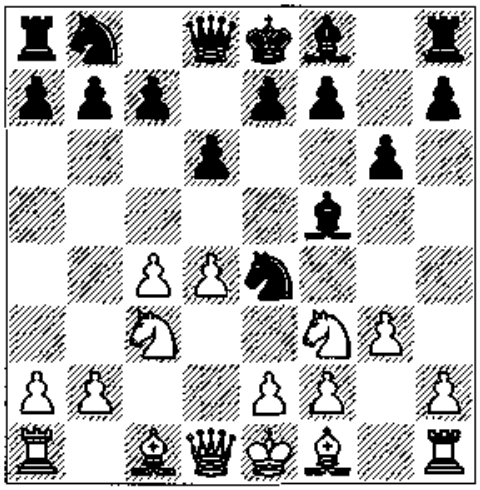
5 g3 ♘e4 *(D)*

Black's only problem here is that the game may transpose to the well-known g3 variations of the King's Indian, which require some theoretical knowledge.

5...♕c8!? is possible, and 5...♗g7 6 ♗g2 will normally transpose to a

positional variation of the Fianchetto King's Indian, but there are also some independent ideas.

W



6 ♘xe4

White has a variety of other moves here:

a) 6 ♗d2 ♗g7 7 ♗g2 ♘xc3 8 ♗xc3 ♗e4 is good for Black: 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♖c1 d5!? 11 ♘e5?! ♗xg2 12 ♔xg2 dxc4 13 ♕a4 ♕d5+ 14 ♔g1 b5 15 e4?? ♕xe5 0-1 Ru.Rodrigues-V.Georgiev, Faro 1999.

b) 6 ♕b3 ♘xc3 7 bxc3 (7 ♕xc3 ♗g7 8 ♗g2 ♕c8 9 0-0 ½-½ Filippov-Malaniuk, Russian Cht (Smolensk) 2000) 7...♗e4! 8 ♗g2 (8 ♗h3 ♗g7 9 0-0 b6 10 ♕a4+ ♗c6 11 ♕c2 0-0 12 e4 e5 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♗a3 ♖e8 15 ♖ad1 ♕f6 ∓ Alexandrov-Vl.Georgiev, Dupnica 1998) 8...♗g7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♗e3 ♘d7 11 ♖fd1 b6 12 c5 ♕b8 13 cxd6 cxd6 14 ♘e5 ♗xg2 15 ♘xd7 ♕b7 16 ♘xf8 ♗h3 17 f3 ♖xf8 18 a4 ♖c8 19 ♖ac1 ♗d7 20 ♖d2 ♕a6 21 a5 bxa5 22 ♖b2 ♗c6 23 ♖a1 a4 and the passed pawn together with the strong bishop compensates for the exchange, Lanzendörfer-Hakshenas, Germany 1990.

c) 6 ♗g2 ♘xc3 7 bxc3 ♗e4! (the alternative 7...♗g7 8 ♘h4 ♗c8 is too passive, and White gets the initiative with 9 0-0 0-0 10 f4! f5 11 e4 fxe4 12 ♗xe4 e6 13 ♖b1 c6 14 d5! ± Norri-Tella, Helsinki rpd 2001) 8 0-0 ♗g7 9 ♗f4 0-0 10 ♕c1 ♖e8 11 ♗h6 e5 12 a4 ♘c6 13 ♖d1 ♕e7 14 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 15 a5 b6 16 axb6 cxb6 17 ♗f1 ♘a5 18 ♘d2 ♗b7 19 ♕b2 ♖ac8 ∓ Cantore-V.Georgiev, Turin 2000.

6...♗xe4 7 ♗h3

7 ♗g2 ♗g7 8 0-0 0-0 transposes to a line of the King's Indian.

7...♗g7

7...d5!?, with a radical change in the position, might appeal to some players. 8 0-0 and now:

a) 8...dxc4 9 ♕a4+ c6 10 ♕xc4 ♗xf3 11 exf3 ♗g7 12 ♗g5 ♕xd4? (12...0-0!? is a better try) 13 ♕e2 ♕e5 14 ♕d2 ♕c7 15 ♖fe1 e5 16 ♖ad1 f6 17 ♖xe5+ fxe5 18 ♗d8 ♕f7 19 ♕d6 b6 20 ♗g5 1-0 Fahnenschmidt-Stohl, Bundesliga 1992/3.

b) 8...♗xf3 9 exf3 ♘c6 10 ♕b3 ♘xd4 11 ♕xb7 ♗g7 12 ♗e3 (12 cxd5 0-0 13 ♔h1 ♖b8 14 ♕xa7 ♕xd5 gives Black sufficient play) 12...♘xf3+ 13 ♔g2 ♘e5 14 cxd5 (14 ♖ad1 ♖b8 15 ♕xd5 ♕xd5+ 16 cxd5 ♖xb2 17 ♖b1 =) 14...♖b8 15 ♕xa7 ♕xd5+ 16 f3 ♖xb2+ 17 ♔g1 0-0 18 ♗g2 ♖a8 19 ♕xc7 ♘g4 0-1 Maurer-Sharif, Liechtenstein 1996.

8 0-0 0-0 9 d5 ♗xf3 10 exf3 ♘d7 11 ♖e1

11 ♖b1 ½-½ Iskusnykh-Khalifman, Russian Cht (St Petersburg) 1999.

11...♘c5 12 ♖b1 a5 13 b3 ♖e8 14 ♗b2 e5 15 dxe6 ♘xe6 16 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 17 ♖xe6 fxe6 18 f4 ♗xb2 19 ♖xb2 ♕f6 20 ♖e2 ♔f7

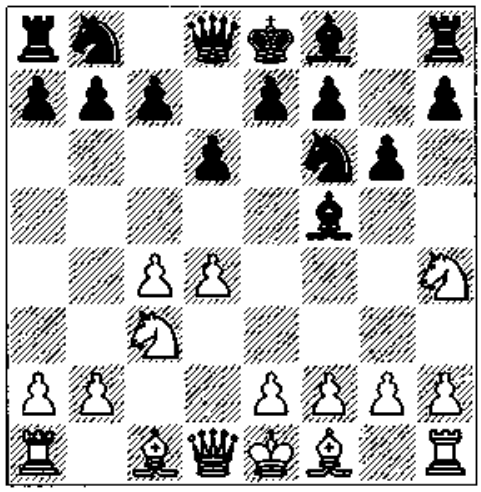
The position is equal, Yermolinsky-Hodgson, Rakvere 1993.

Conclusion: 5 g3 leads to positional lines, in which Black should do quite well with a common-sense approach.

C2)

5 ♘h4 *(D)*

B



This move, chasing the bishop and securing White a chance to play e4, is probably the most critical option.

5...♗d7 6 e4 ♗g7

Or:

a) 6...c5!? is not played so often, but is one of the main challenges for White. 7 d5 e6 8 ♘f3 (8 dxe6!? ♗xe6 9 ♘f3 ♘c6 10 ♗f4 looks quite critical) 8...exd5 9 exd5 (9 cxd5?! ♗g7 10 ♗d3 0-0 11 0-0 b5! 12 ♗xb5 ♘xe4 13 ♗xd7 ♘xc3 14 bxc3 ♘xd7 ∓ Kalinichev-Varavin, Novosibirsk 1989) 9...♗g7 10 ♗e2 0-0 11 0-0 and now a typical position has been reached, but with an extra tempo ...♗d7 for Black, so the critical question is if there are ways to make use of this tempo. The idea 11...♘a6!?, with the normal well-scoring plan of ...♘c7, ...♖b8, ...a6 and ...b5, suggests itself as the bishop is already supporting the ...b5 break.

b) 6...e5 7 ♘f3 ♗g7 (7...exd4 8 ♘xd4 ♗g7 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 0-0 transposes to note 'b' to Black's 9th move; 7...♘c6?! 8 d5 ♘e7 lets White play 9 c5!, which gives him positional pressure: 9...♗g7 10 ♕b3 ♕b8 11 cxd6 cxd6 12 ♗b5 0-0 13 ♗g5 ♗g4 14 ♘d2 h6 15 ♗e3 ♗c8 16 ♗e2 ♘g4 17 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 18 0-0 ♗d7 19 a4 f5 20 f3 f4 21 ♗f2 g5 22 ♖fc1 ♖f7 23 ♘b5 ± Nikitin-Malaniuk, St Petersburg 2000) 8 ♗e2 (8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ♘xe5 ♘xe4 10 ♘xe4 ♗xe5 11 ♗g5 f6 12 ♗c1 ♕e7 ∓) transposes to the main line.

7 ♗e2 e5

7...0-0 8 ♘f3 ♕e8?! is one idea to use the extra tempo, but White has 9 e5! dxe5 10 ♘xe5 ♗f5 11 ♗f3 c6 12 0-0 ♘bd7 13 ♗f4 ♘xe5 14 ♗xe5 ± Sosonko-Riemersma, Dutch Ch (Rotterdam) 1997.

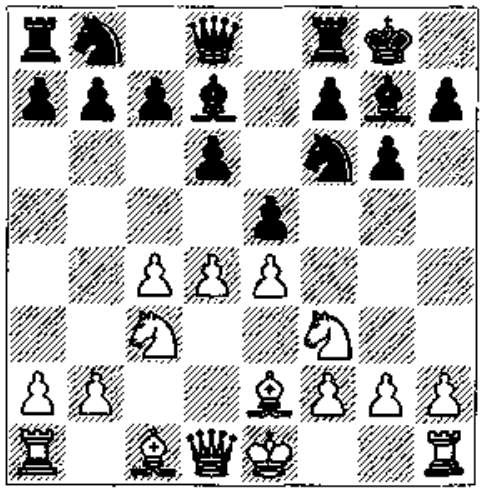
8 ♘f3 0-0 *(D)*

9 0-0

This position is well known in the Classical King's Indian, except for the small difference that the black bishop is on d7 here. Black can play ideas similar to the main lines of the King's Indian, but there are also some more creative tries.

a) 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♘xe5 is not dangerous for Black because 10...♘xe4 11 ♘xe4 (11 ♘xd7? ♘xc3 wins for

W



Black) 11...♗xe5 12 ♗g5 ♕e8 13 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 14 ♗xf6 ♕e6 15 ♗d4 (15 ♗c3 ♖e8 ∓) 15...♖e8 16 ♗e3 ♗c6 favours Black according to Khalifman.

b) 9 ♗e3 ♘g4 10 ♗g5 f6 has been tried, but with no effect: 11 ♗c1 (11 ♗h4 ♘c6 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♕d5+ ♔h8 14 0-0-0 was unclear in Khalifman-I.Sokolov, Pärnu 1996) 11...♘c6 12 d5 ♘e7 13 ♘d2 ♘h6 14 c5 ♘f7 15 ♕b3 ♖b8 16 cxd6 cxd6 17 a4 f5 18 f3 ♗h6 = Schiissler-Benjamin, Reykjavik tt 1990.

9...♘c6

Or:

a) 9...♕e8 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♗e3 ♘a6 12 ♘d2 is a little better for White according to Khalifman, but the only example looked OK for Black and featured some original tactical ideas: 12...♕e7!? 13 ♘d5 ♘xd5 14 cxd5 c6 15 ♖c1 (15 ♕b3!?) 15...cxd5 16 ♗xa6 d4 17 ♗xb7 ♖ab8 18 ♗d5 (18 ♖c7!?) 18...dxe3 19 ♘c4 exf2+ 20 ♖xf2 ♗h6 21 ♖c3 ♔g7 is unclear, Southam-Whitehead, North Bay 1998.

b) 9...exd4!? 10 ♘xd4 ♖e8 11 f3 ♘c6 gives White a slight advantage according to Khalifman, but there is the interesting plan 12 ♗e3 ♘h5! 13 ♕d2 ♘f4, and now:

b1) 14 ♘xc6 is a move that is not considered very dangerous for Black in the position where the bishop is on c8. 14...♘xe2+ 15 ♘xe2 bxc6 (another idea is 15...♗xc6!?) 16 ♖ad1 ♗e6 (16...♕b8!?, with the point 17 b3 a5 18 c5 a4!?, is one possible idea where ...♗d7 is useful) 17 b3 c5 18 ♘f4 ♕c8 (18...a5!? looks a safe improvement) 19 ♕a5!, Cebalo-Loncar, Makarska Tucepi 1995.

b2) 14 ♖fd1!? is the main move when the bishop is on c8, but here Black has a clear extra tempo after 14...♘xe2+ 15 ♘cxe2 and now a suitable plan might be 15...a6 16 ♖ac1 ♘xd4 17 ♘xd4 b5!?.

10 d5 ♘e7 11 ♘e1

Black has no problems after 11 ♘d2?! a5 or 11 b4?! ♘h5 12 ♖e1 f5 13 ♘g5 ♘f6 14 ♗f3 ♕c8.

11...♘e8

11...c6 12 ♘d3 ♘e8 13 ♗e3 ±.

12 ♗e3 f5 13 f3 f4

13...c5?! 14 dxc6 bxc6 15 c5 ±.

14 ♗f2 h5 15 c5 dxc5 16 ♗xc5 ♘d6 17 ♘d3 g5 18 ♔h1 ♘g6

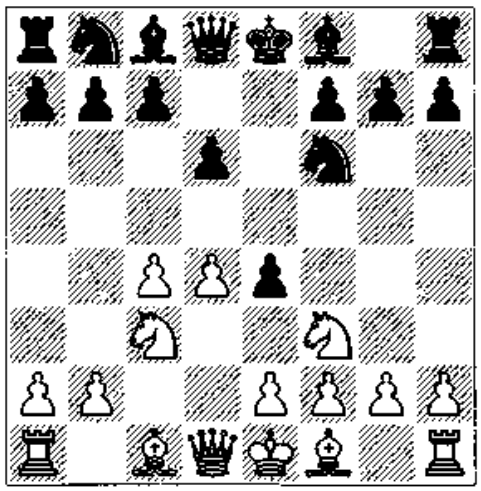
D.Gurevich-V.Georgiev, Bermuda 1998. Now 19 a4! gives White some advantage according to Khalifman.

Conclusion: The variation starting with the slightly surprising 5 ♘h4 seems to be one of the most critical tries against the Old Indian with ...♗f5. However, besides the quite playable main line, there also seem to be many unexplored ideas.

32 1 d4 d6 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♘f3 e4

Besides the 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 main line, Black has another, more positional approach available, namely the variation 3...e4 4 ♘g5 ♘f6. White usually gets some advantage because of his strong centre, as Black's main plan is to protect the e4-pawn with his pieces, not pawns, and usually the game has focused on the sharp play that White initiates with 5 ♘c3 ♗f5 6 g4. However, Black has some targets for his counterplay, and some strong players have played this variation quite frequently.

1 d4 d6 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♘f3 e4 *(D)*



Now:

A: 5 ♘g1 253
B: 5 ♘d2 254
C: 5 ♘g5 256

Line C can also be reached via the move-order 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♗f5, though then White doesn't have the sidelines (5 ♘g1 and 5 ♘d2) available. This is important, as the most critical position at the moment seems to be in precisely the 'sideline' 5 ♘d2 ♗f5 6 ♕b3.

A)

5 ♘g1

White is going to regroup with e3 and ♘ge2-g3. Black has committed his knight to f6, which means that it will not be possible to support the centre with ...f5.

5...h6 6 e3

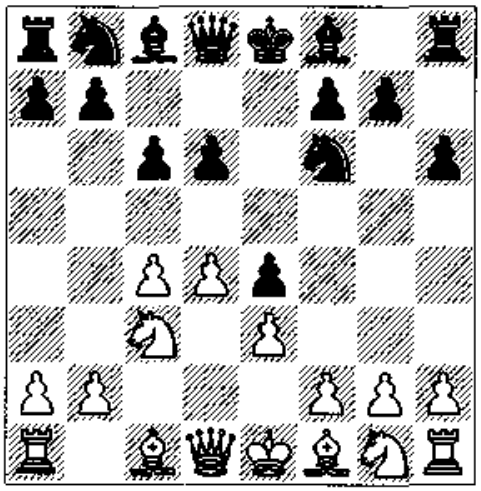
Or:

a) 6 g3 c6 7 d5 ♗f5 8 ♗g2 ♘bd7 is equal according to Epishin, as Black's e4-pawn is quite strong.

b) 6 ♗f4 g5!? 7 ♗d2 ♗g7 8 e3 ♗f5 9 ♘ge2 ♗g6 10 ♕b3 b6 11 ♘g3 0-0 12 ♗e2 c5 is fine for Black because of his active piece-play, Bisguier-Bronstein, Budapest 1961.

6...c6 *(D)*

Black's main plan is to support the centre with ...d5. However, this should



be done carefully, as the d5-pawn can become weak sometimes.

7 ♘ge2 ♗f5!

7...d5 8 ♘f4 ± Epishin.

8 ♘g3 ♗g6 9 f3 d5

9...exf3 10 gxf3 ± intending e4 (Epishin). Black should fight for the centre as long as possible.

10 cxd5

Epishin gives 10 ♕b3!? as an alternative; for example, 10...♕b6 11 cxd5 ♕xb3 12 axb3 cxd5 13 ♘b5 ♔d7 14 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 15 ♘xa7 ♘c6 16 ♘xc6 bxc6 and Black's better pawn-structure gives him enough compensation.

10...exf3! 11 gxf3

11 dxc6 fxg2 12 cxb7 gxh1♕ 13 ♘xh1 ♘bd7 14 bxa8♕ ♕xa8 is quite a mess, and it has not been tested yet.

11...cxd5 12 ♗d3!

12 ♕b3 ♕d7 13 ♗b5 ♘c6 14 e4 a6 ∓.

12...♗xd3 13 ♕xd3 ♘c6

with possibilities for both players, Lputian-Epishin, Rostov 1993.

Conclusion: The continuation 5 ♘g1 is not especially dangerous for Black, though it might result in some sharp positions.

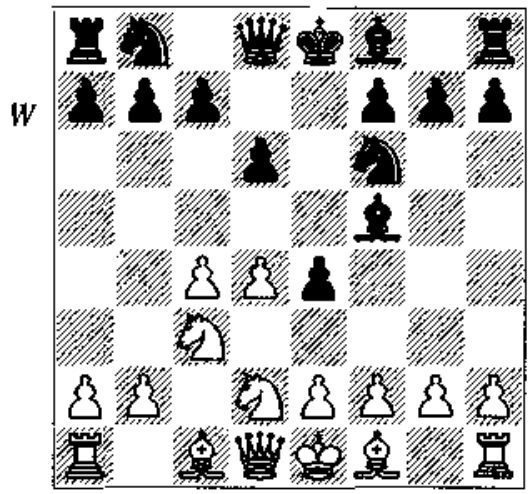
B)

5 ♘d2

At the moment this logical, though slightly passive, way of attacking e4 is the best choice for White.

5...♗f5 *(D)*

5...♕e7 develops too slowly, allowing White to take the initiative with 6 e3 g6 7 ♗e2 h5 8 0-0 ♗h6 9 f3! ♗xe3+ 10 ♔h1 0-0 (10...exf3 11 ♖xf3 ♗h6?! { 11...♗xd4 12 ♘de4 ♗xc3 13 ♘xc3 ±} 12 ♘de4 ♘xe4 13 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 14 ♗xh6 ♖xh6 15 ♕d2 +–) 11 ♘dxe4 ♗xc1 12 ♕xc1 ♘c6 13 ♕d2 ♘h7 14 ♘d5 ♕d8 15 f4 ± I.Sokolov-Gheorghiu, Kavala tt 1990.



6 e3

This is the old main line, but line 'b' may render it irrelevant:

a) 6 ♕c2 ♗g6 (6...c6 7 f3 d5 8 cxd5 cxd5 9 e3 ♘c6 10 ♗b5 ♖c8 11 0-0 ♗g6 12 fxe4 dxe4 13 ♘dxe4 ♘xe4 14 ♘xe4 a6 15 ♗xc6+ ♖xc6 16 ♕b3 ♕c7 17 ♕d5 ♗e7 18 ♘c3 0-0 gives

Black sufficient compensation, Shocron-Wexler, Buenos Aires 1958), and now White must avoid the variation 7 ♘dxe4? ♘xe4 8 ♘xe4 d5 9 cxd5 (9 ♕a4+ b5 10 ♕xb5+ c6 11 ♕b7 dxe4 12 ♕xa8 ♗b4+ 13 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 14 ♔xd2 ♕xd4+ −+ Radzenko-Nisman, USSR 1971) 9...♗b4+, when Black has the advantage.

b) After 6 ♕b3!, Black's position is critical: 6...♘c6 (6...♕c8 7 e3 c6 8 h3 h5 9 ♗e2 ♗e7 10 a3 ♘a6 11 f3 ± Plaskett-Dunnington, Hastings 1987/8) 7 e3 and now:

b1) 7...a5 and here:

b11) 8 ♕xb7 ♘b4 (better than 8...♖b8 9 ♕xc6+ ♗d7 10 ♕a6 ♖a8 11 ♕b7 ♖b8 12 ♕xb8 ♕xb8 13 ♘dxe4 ±) 9 ♘b5 ♖b8 10 ♘xc7+ ♔d7 ∓.

b12) 8 a3 ♖b8 9 g3 ♕e7 10 ♗g2 g6 and then:

b121) 11 ♕c2 ♗g7 (11...♘xd4 12 exd4 e3 13 ♘de4 ±) 12 ♘dxe4 ♘xe4 13 ♗xe4 (13 ♘xe4 0-0 14 0-0 ♖fe8 15 f3 ±) 13...0-0 14 0-0 ♗xe4 15 ♕xe4 ±.

b122) 11 ♘d5 ♘xd5 12 cxd5 ♘d8 13 h3 h5 14 ♕c2 ± Grdinić-Kovačević, Pula 1990.

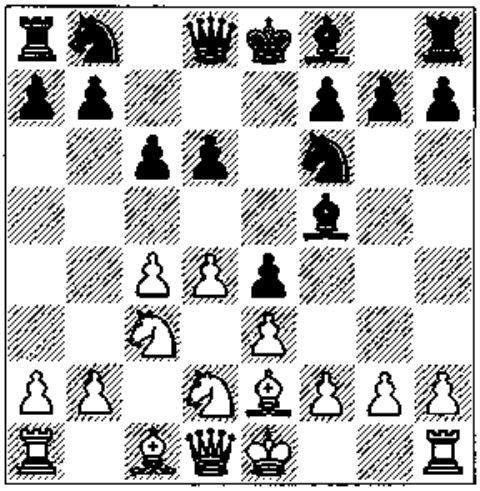
b2) 7...♖b8 and now:

b21) 8 ♕a4?! ♕d7 9 d5 ♘e5 10 ♕xa7 ♕c8 11 ♕d4 c5 12 dxc6 ♘xc6 13 ♕b6 ♗e7 is probably good enough for Black, Yusupov-Ljubojević, Linares 1988.

b22) 8 g3! (White simply attacks thee4 weakness, and there is not much Black can do) 8...d5 (8...♕e7 9 ♗g2 a6 10 d5 ♘d8 11 ♕c2 ± Khalifman) 9 cxd5 ♘b4 10 ♗c4 ♗d6 11 a3 ♘a6 12 ♕a4+ ♔f8 13 b4 ± Aleksandrov-Varavin, St Petersburg 2000.

6...c6 7 ♗e2 *(D)*

B



7...♕d7

Black gains counterplay thanks to this queen move before making the ...d5 push.

7...d5 8 ♕b3 ♕d7 9 cxd5 (9 f3 exf3 10 ♘xf3 ♗d6 11 ♘e5 ♗xe5 12 dxe5 ♘g4 ± Gligorić-Schmid, Zurich 1961) 9...cxd5 10 f3 exf3 11 ♘xf3 ♗d6 12 ♘e5 ♗xe5 13 dxe5 ♘e4 14 0-0 ♘c6 15 ♖d1 ± Smyslov-Bronstein, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1949.

8 g4

Other options:

a) 8 d5 ♘a6 9 ♘b3 ♖c8 10 ♗d2 ♗e7 11 ♘d4 ♗g6 12 a3 0-0 (the alternative 12...♘c5!? 13 0-0 ♘d3 is unclear) 13 b4 cxd5 14 cxd5 ♘c7 15 ♕b3 ♘g4 16 ♘e6 ♘xe6 (16...fxe6! 17 dxe6 ♕xe6 18 ♕xe6+ ♘xe6 19 ♗xg4 ♔f7 ±) 17 dxe6 ♕xe6 18 ♕xe6 fxe6 19 ♗xg4 ♗f5 20 ♗xf5 exf5 21 ♘d5 1-0 Lundin-Vestol, Helsinki 1947.

b) 8 b4 ♘a6 9 ♖b1 c5 (9...♘c7!? 10 b5 c5 might be possible) 10 dxc5 dxc5 11 a3 cxb4 12 c5 bxc3 13 ♗b5 cxd2+ 14 ♕xd2 ♘xc5 15 0-0 ♗e7 16

♗xd7+ ♘fxd7 17 ♗b2 0-0 is much better for Black, Regis-Degenhardt, Germany 1997/8.

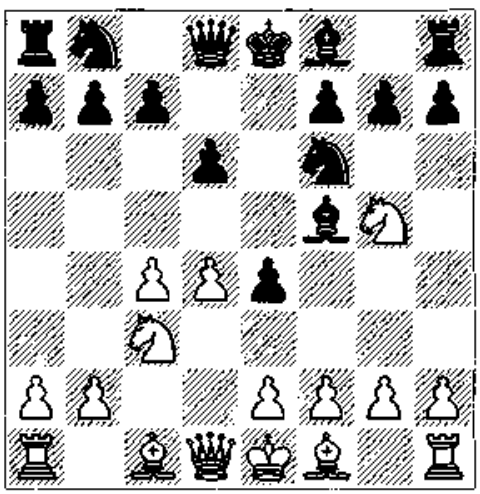
8...♘xg4 9 ♘dxe4 d5 10 ♘g3 ♗e6 11 e4 ♘f6 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♗g5 ♗b4 14 ♗xf6 gxf6 15 a3 ♗xc3+ 16 bxc3 ♕c7 17 ♕d2 ♘d7

Black is OK, P.Schlosser-Hickl, W.German Ch (Bad Neuenahr) 1989. The rest of the game was 18 exd5 ♗xd5 19 ♖g1 0-0-0 20 c4 ½-½.

Conclusion: 5 ♘d2 ♗f5 6 ♕b3 is a real problem for Black at the moment.

C)

5 ♘g5 ♗f5 *(D)*



6 g4

Or:

a) 6 ♕c2?! is very well answered by the thematic tactical operation 6...h6! 7 ♘gxe4 ♘xe4 8 ♘xe4 ♕h4!, when Black has at least equality: 9 ♘xd6+ (9 ♕a4+ ♗d7 10 ♕c2 ♗f5 11 ♕a4+ ♗d7 12 ♕c2 ½-½ Cruz-Rubinetti, Buenos Aires 1964; 9 g4?! ♕xg4 10 f3 ♕h4+ 11 ♔d1 ♘c6 12 e3 g6 13 ♕f2 ♕d8 14 ♘g3 ♗d7 15 ♗d2 ♗g7 and Black is slightly better, Schön-Davies, W.Berlin 1987) 9...♗xd6 10 ♕xf5 ♗b4+ and then:

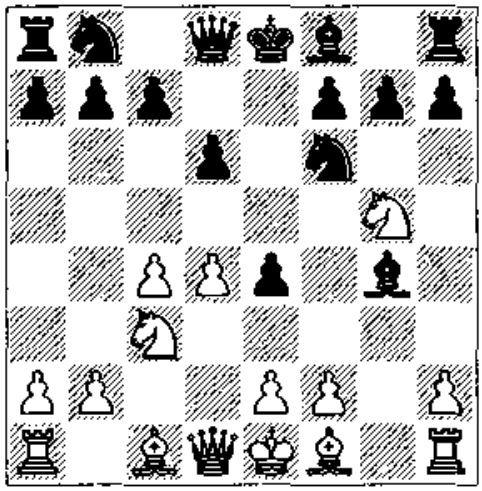
a1) 11 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12 ♔xd2 ♕xd4+ 13 ♔c1 ♕xc4+ 14 ♔b1 ♕d4 (14...0-0!? 15 e3 ♕b4 16 ♗d3 g6 17 ♕f6 ♘d7 18 ♕c3 ♕b6 19 ♖c1 c6 20 a4 a5 21 ♖a3 ♖fe8 22 h3 ♖ad8 = Ward-Nay, Paris 1988) 15 a3 ♘c6 16 e3 ♕d1+ 17 ♔a2 ♘b4+ ½-½ Moskowitz-Smook, Hollywood 1954.

a2) 11 ♔d1 ♕xd4+ 12 ♔c2 ♕xc4+ 13 ♔b1 ♘d7 14 e4 ♕c5 15 ♕xc5 ♗xc5 16 f3 ♔e7 17 ♗f4 c6 18 ♔c2 ♖hd8 19 ♖d1 ♘f8 20 ♗c4 ♘e6 21 ♗xe6 ♔xe6 ½-½ Boleslavsky-Bronstein, Budapest Ct 1950.

b) 6 f3!? is possible but it should not be too dangerous for Black: 6...exf3 7 exf3 (7 gxf3 c5 8 d5 g6 9 e4 ♗c8 10 ♗e3 ♗g7 11 ♕d2 ♘bd7 12 f4 0-0 13 ♖g1 a6 14 a4 ♖e8 15 ♗d3 ♘f8 16 ♖g3 ♘g4 17 ♗g1 h6 18 ♘h3 f5 19 0-0-0 ♗xc3 20 ♕xc3 fxe4 ∓ Gulko-Benjamin, USA Ch (Los Angeles) 1993) 7...♗e7 8 ♗d3 ♗xd3 9 ♕xd3 c6 10 0-0 d5 11 c5 b6 12 b4 h6 13 ♘h3 a5 14 ♘a4 ♘bd7 15 b5 (not 15 ♗f4? axb4 16 ♘xb6, Delamarre-Van der Wiel, Wijk aan Zee 1995, 16...♘xc5! −+) 15...cxb5 16 ♕xb5 bxc5 is good for Black.

6...♗xg4 *(D)*

White will collect the e4-pawn, making the pawn-formation nicely unbalanced. White has more pawns in the centre, which basically guarantees him some advantage, though Black has been getting counterplay even against very strong opposition.



7 ♗g2

7 ♘gxe4?! ♘xe4 (7...♘bd7 8 ♕d3 ♗e7 9 ♕g3 ♗f5 10 ♗g2 ♖b8 11 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 12 ♕e3+ ♕e7 13 ♘b5 ♕xe3 14 ♗xe3 ♔d8 15 ♘xa7 c6 16 ♗xc6 bxc6 17 ♘xc6+ ♔c7 18 ♘xb8 ♘xb8 19 ♔d2 ± Alburt-Ginsburg, Lone Pine 1979) 8 ♘xe4 allows central counterplay by 8...d5!:

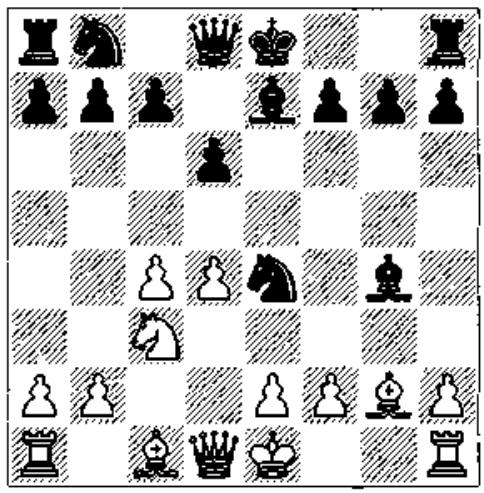
a) 9 ♘c3 dxc4 10 ♕a4+ ♕d7 (10...♘c6!? 11 d5 ♗d7 12 ♕xc4 ♘b4 is unclear; 10...c6!? 11 ♕xc4 ♗e6 12 ♕d3 ♘a6 =) 11 ♕xc4 ♕c6 12 ♕b5 ♕xb5 13 ♘xb5 ♘a6 14 ♗f4 c6 15 ♘c3 0-0-0 16 ♖g1 ♗e6 = Lein-Lisitsyn, USSR Cht 1968.

b) 9 cxd5 ♕xd5 10 ♗g2 ♗b4+ 11 ♔f1 (11 ♗d2? ♕xd4 12 ♕b3 ♘c6 13 0-0-0 ♗e6 14 ♗xb4 ♕xb4 15 ♕xb4 ♘xb4 16 a3 ♘d5 17 ♘c5 0-0-0 ∓ Dolezal-Ježek, Podebrady 1956) 11...♕d7 12 ♕b3 ♘c6 13 ♗e3 (13 d5 ♘d4 14 ♕e3 {14 ♕xb4 ♗xe2+ 15 ♔g1 ♘f3+ 16 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 ∓} 14...♘c2 15 ♘f6++ ♔d8 16 ♘xd7 ♘xe3+ 17 ♗xe3 ♗xd7 =) 13...♗e6 14 ♕d3 ♗d5 15 a3 ♗e7 16 h4 f5 = Poldauf-Vesely, Prague 1989.

7...♗e7

7...♘c6 8 ♘gxe4 ♘xe4 9 ♘xe4 ♕d7?! (9...♗e7 transposes to Line C1) 10 h3 ♗f5 11 ♘g3 ♗g6 12 h4 h6 13 ♕b3 ± Schmid-Westerinen, Bamberg 1968.

8 ♘gxe4 ♘xe4 *(D)*



This is the basic position, where White can take with knight or bishop.

C1: 9 ♘xe4 257
C2: 9 ♗xe4 258

Opinions differ as to which is best.

C1)

9 ♘xe4 ♘c6

9...♕d7 10 ♕b3 c6 11 ♘g3 ♕c7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♗f4 ♕d7 14 e4 ♗f6 15 ♗e3 ♗h4 16 ♖ae1 ±, Pinter-McNab, Malta OL 1980.

10 ♗e3

Or:

a) 10 0-0 ♕d7 11 ♘g3 (11 f4 ♗h3 12 ♗xh3 ♕xh3 13 d5 ♘d8 14 ♖f3 ♕h4 15 ♘g3 ♕g4 16 ♔h1 h5 17 ♕d3 g6 18 ♗d2 h4 19 ♘e4 ♕f5 20 ♗c3 ♖h5 and Black is fine, Nogueiras-McNab, Malta OL 1980) 11...♗f6 12 d5 ♘e7 13 a4 ♘g6 14 ♖a3 0-0-0 15 a5 ♖de8

(Nikolić-Benjamin, Horgen 1994) 16 f3 ♗h3 17 e4 ±.

b) 10 ♘g3 ♗f6 11 ♗e3 0-0 12 ♕d2 ♖b8 13 h3 ♗d7 14 ♘h5 ♗h4 15 ♖g1 g6 16 0-0-0 ♔h8 17 ♘f4 ± Piket-Van der Wiel, Dutch Ch 1995.

c) 10 ♕d3 0-0 11 ♘g3 d5!? 12 cxd5 ♘b4 13 ♕b3 c6 14 dxc6 ♘xc6 15 e3 ♗b4+ 16 ♔f1 ♕e7 17 a3 ♗a5 18 ♕d3 ♖ad8 19 b4 ♗b6 20 ♗b2 ♕f6 21 ♖b1 ♖fe8 gives Black a lot of compensation, Tuomala-Lehto, Finnish Cht 1989.

d) 10 h3 ♗d7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♘c3 f5 13 ♘d5 ♗h4 14 c5 ♔h8 15 cxd6 cxd6 16 ♗f4 ♗e6 17 ♘c3 ♘e7 18 ♘b5 ♗d5 19 f3 ♘g6 20 ♗xd6 ♗e7 21 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 22 ♕d2 f4 and Black's activity is worth more than a pawn, Farago-Jacobsen, Silkeborg 1988.

10...0-0 11 ♕d2 ♗f5 12 ♘c3

12 0-0-0!?.

12...♗h4

There is an interesting imbalance in the position: White has the better centre, but Black is well developed and White's king doesn't always know where to go. The basic evaluation as ± because of White's centre is maybe closest to the truth, though some players, especially Hickl and Speelman, have argued that Black is OK.

13 0-0

13 0-0-0!?.

13...♕d7 14 ♔h1 ♖ae8 15 ♖g1 ♗g6 16 ♖af1 ♘e7 17 ♗g5 ♘f5 18 ♗xh4 ♘xh4 19 ♕f4 ♘xg2 20 ♖xg2 c6 21 f3

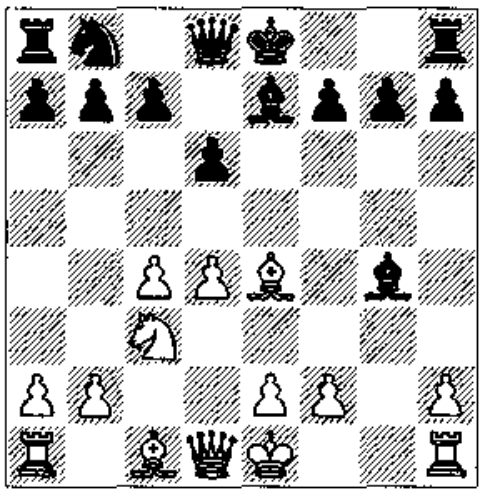
± Salov-Speelman, Brussels 1988. White has blockaded the centre and controls the g-file, while Black's pieces are slightly passive. The game concluded 21...♖e7 22 ♖fg1 f6 23 h4 d5! 24 cxd5 cxd5 25 ♔h2 b5! 26 a3 ½-½.

Conclusion: White may get a small positional advantage here because of his strong centre, but Black has good chances of holding the position.

C2)

9 ♗xe4 *(D)*

B



9...c6

9...♘c6!? is a fairly logical move, but it has only been played once: 10 ♕d3 ♗h5 11 ♖g1 ♗g6 12 ♘d5 ♕d7 13 ♘xe7 ♕xe7 14 ♖g4? 0-0-0 15 ♗f5+ ♔b8 16 ♗g5 f6 17 ♗e3 ♘b4 18 ♕b1 ♗xf5 19 ♕xf5 g6 20 ♕b1 ♕e6 21 ♖f4 d5 and Black is much better, Rötteler-Werner, Badenweil 1990.

10 ♕d3

10 ♕c2 is worse due to 10...♗h5 11 ♖g1 ♗g6, when the white queen is more passive than in the main line, and Black had strong counterplay after 12 ♗f4 ♘a6 13 0-0-0 ♕d7 14 ♗xg6 fxg6 15 e4 0-0 16 ♗e3 ♗h4 17 f4 ♕h3 18

♕d2 ♖ae8 in Neurohr-Hickl, Bundesliga 1989/90.

10...♗h5

Not 10...♘d7? 11 ♗xh7 +−.

11 ♕h3

White forces a weakening of Black's pawns, as the h-pawn is pinned.

a) 11 ♖g1 ♗g6 12 f4 d5! =.

b) 11 ♗f4 ♗g6 12 0-0-0 ♘a6 (or 12...♘d7 13 ♕g3 ♘f6 14 ♗f3 intending h4) 13 h4 (13 ♗xg6 hxg6 14 d5 ♖h4 15 e3 ♕a5 16 ♔b1 ♖c8 17 ♗g3 ♖h5 18 e4 ♔f8 19 ♖hel ♔g8 gives Black counterplay, Brenninkmeijer-Blees, Dutch Ch (Hilversum) 1989) and now:

b1) 13...♗xh4 14 ♗xg6 fxg6 15 ♕e4+ ♔f7 (15...♗e7? 16 ♖xh7 +−) 16 ♗xd6 ±.

b2) 13...♕d7 14 h5 ♗xe4 15 ♕xe4 ±.

b3) 13...d5 14 cxd5 ♘b4 15 ♕e3 ♗xe4 (15...cxd5? 16 ♗xg6 hxg6 17 a3 ♘c6 18 ♕f3 ♖h5 19 e4 is much better for White, Polugaevsky-Hickl, Haifa Echt 1989; 15...♘xd5? 16 ♗xd5 cxd5 17 h5 ♗f5 18 ♕e5 +−) 16 ♕xe4 ♘xd5 17 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 18 ♕xd5 cxd5 19 ♔d2 ± Polugaevsky.

11...♗g6

11...♗h4? 12 ♖g1 0-0 13 ♗g5 +−.

12 ♗xg6 fxg6

White's better pawn-structure should give him a small advantage, but Black has some tactical ideas that can easily give him counterplay.

13 ♗f4

13 e4 ♘a6 14 ♗e3 0-0 15 0-0 ♘c7 16 f4 ♔h8 17 d5 ♗f6 18 ♖ad1 cxd5 19 cxd5 ♕e8 20 ♖fe1 ♘b5!? and Black has counterplay, Reich-Hickl, Bad Wörishofen 1990.

13...0-0

The alternative 13...♕d7!? has also been suggested.

14 e3

14 ♕e6+ ♔h8 15 ♗g3 ♘a6 16 h4 ♖f5 17 0-0-0 ½-½ Psakhis-Hickl, Dortmund 1989, but 14 ♗g3!? might be an improvement.

14...♘a6 15 0-0-0 ♘c7 16 ♔b1 a6 17 ♘e4?

17 ♔a1 gives White a slight advantage according to Speelman.

17...g5! 18 ♗g3 ♕e8 19 ♔a1 ♕g6 20 ♕g2 ♘e8

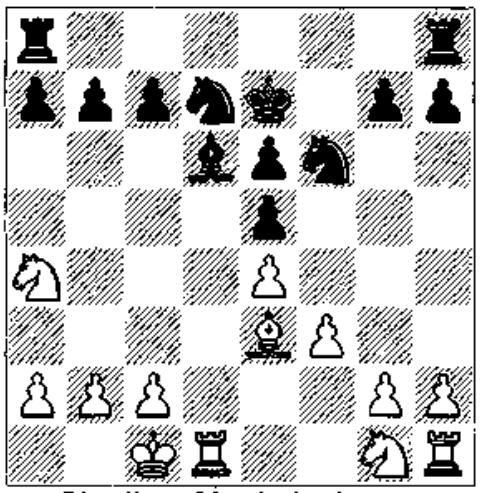
The position is unclear, Kasparov-Speelman, Belfort 1988. The rest of the game was 21 ♖dg1 b5 22 c5 dxc5 23 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 24 dxc5 ♖d8 25 h4 gxh4 26 ♖xh4 ♖d2 27 ♖d4 ♖e2 28 ♕h1 ♕c2 29 ♖b1 ♕xc5 30 ♕e4 ♘f6 31 ♕e6+ ♔h8 32 ♗e5 h6 33 ♖h1 ♖xf2 34 a3 ♕c2 35 ♖dh4 ♕g6 36 ♕xc6 ♕f5 37 ♖f4 ♖xf4 38 exf4 ♔h7 39 ♖g1 ♖f7 40 ♕xa6 b4 41 ♕c4 ♘d7 ½-½.

Conclusion: White probably also has a small advantage here, but again Black has good chances of making his counterplay real.

33 Endgame Systems when White Plays e4

In this book we study the endgame system in many different forms. After 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 dxe5 4 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 the endgame is already good for Black, as White has lost the possibility of controlling the d4-square with his c-pawn. After 1 d4 d6 2 g3 e5 3 dxe5 dxe5 4 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 White might get some pressure against Black's king in the centre, especially with the early break f4. The most principled forms of this endgame, 1 e4 d6 2 d4 e5 and 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 e5, are studied in this chapter.

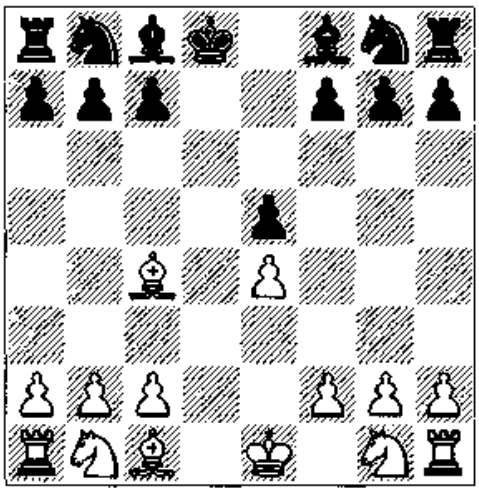
Black's Main Ideas



W

Gipslis – Moskalenko
Alushta 1993

The main idea for Black in the endgame positions in this chapter is introduced in the diagram above. Black is ready to accept doubled isolated pawns in the centre, and later to build an ultra-solid central formation with ...♗d6, ...♔e7, ...♘f6 and ...♘bd7. Since the centre is totally closed, Black can create activity either on the queenside with ...♖hb8 and ...b5, or on the kingside with ...♖ag8 and ...g5, for example. The doubled pawns guard the central squares very well, though Black should keep an eye on the weak e5-pawn.



B

Papanetz – Novak
Slovakia 1996

The most direct way to reach the endgame is 1 e4 d6 2 d4 e5. In this

move-order it is less wise for Black to accept doubled pawns, as White can target the e5-weakness more effectively with plans like ♘bd2-c4, b3 and ♗b2, and ♘h3-f2-d3. However, after 5...♔e8 it is difficult for White to gain anything concrete from his development advantage, since the structure is completely symmetrical.

White's main plan is to pressurize Black's weakness on e5, and control the position all over the board. However, White's task is not very easy, as there no clear concrete plans that are always good. Probably White is forced to seek winning chances in a long 'physical' endgame.

1 e4 d6 2 d4

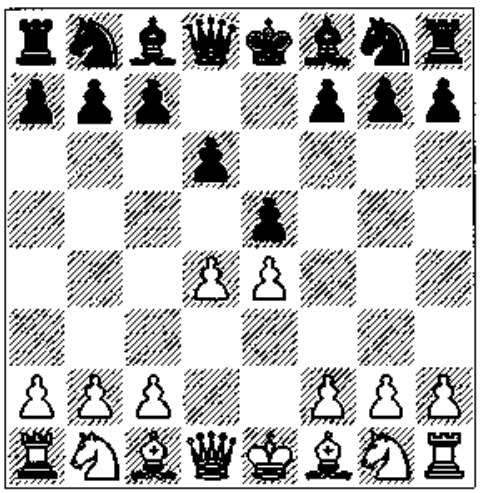
We now discuss:

A: 2...e5 261
B: 2...♘f6 3 ♘c3 e5 263
C: 2...♘f6 3 f3 e5 266

A)

2...e5 *(D)*

W



3 dxe5

3 ♘f3 is the standard Philidor Defence, which is regarded as good for White. Here is a very brief summary of the main problems facing Black in this opening:

a) 3...♘f6?! 4 dxe5 ♘xe4 is well met by the tactical move 5 ♕d5!; for example, 5...♘c5 6 ♗g5 ♕d7 (6...♗e7 7 exd6 ±) 7 exd6 ♗xd6 8 ♘c3 0-0 9 0-0-0 ♘c6 10 ♘b5 ♕g4 11 ♘xd6 cxd6 12 ♗e3 ± Tiviakov-Barbero, Imperia 1993.

b) 3...♘d7 4 ♗c4 c6 (4...♗e7?! 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 ♕d5! +–; 4...h6?! 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 ♗xf7+! ♔xf7 7 ♘xe5+ ±) 5 0-0 ♗e7 (5...♕c7!?) 6 dxe5 dxe5 (not 6...♘xe5?! 7 ♘xe5 dxe5 8 ♕h5 g6 9 ♕xe5 ±) and now the tactical idea 7 ♘g5! secures White the bishop-pair and an advantage; for example, 7...♗xg5 8 ♕h5 ♕e7 9 ♗xg5 ♘gf6 10 ♕e2 ± Gipslis-Csom, Budapest 1977.

c) 3...exd4!? might be Black's best line but tends not to equalize.

3...dxe5 4 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8

The game has transformed into a queenless middlegame after just four moves. Black's king will stay in the centre, which is good if he can simplify the game further to a genuine endgame. This means that White has to play actively.

5 ♗c4

Or:

a) 5 ♘f3?! gives Black no problems, as White loses his most active option to attack the centre with f4, and Black just continues with standard plans: 5...f6 6 ♗e3 ♗e6 7 ♘bd2 ♘d7 8 ♗c4 ♗xc4 9 ♘xc4 ♗c5 10 0-0-0 ♗xe3+ 11 ♘xe3 ♘e7 12 ♖d3 ♔c8 13

♘d2 ♘c5 14 ♖c3 b6 15 f3 ♖d8 16 ♘b3 ♘e6 17 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 18 ♔xd1 ♔b7 with equality, Tribuiani-Mordiglia, Formia 1995.

b) 5 ♘c3 ♘f6 transposes to Line B, which is generally a better move-order for Black.

c) 5 f4!? is logical here, trying to open the position while the black king remains in the centre. Black's best approach is to support the e5-square with 5...♘d7 6 ♘f3 ♗d6, which should give him good chances to equalize: 7 ♘bd2 ♘gf6 8 ♗c4 (8 ♘c4!? exf4 9 ♘xd6 cxd6 10 ♗xf4 ♘xe4 11 ♗c4 with compensation) 8...exf4 9 ♗xf7 ♖f8 10 ♗b3 h6 11 0-0 g5 12 ♖e1 ♖e8! 13 h3 ♘e5 (13...a5!? 14 a4 c6 15 ♔h1 g4 is also possible for Black) 14 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 15 ♗c4 ♗f5! and Black was OK in Hector-Gretarsson, Nordic Ch (Reykjavik) 1997.

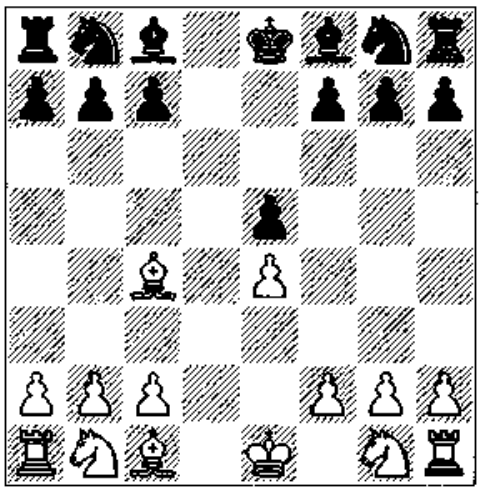
5...♔e8!?

This move has mainly been played by Ivan Novak, and his results show no reason to complain, though basically the position should be evaluated as ±. However, Novak's logical plans are hard to break. Alternatives:

a) 5...f6?! does nothing to challenge White's advantage, and White secures the better game with the active plan 6 f4; e.g., 6...♗d6 7 fxe5 ♗xe5 8 ♘f3 ♘c6 9 ♘c3 ♗g4 10 ♗e3 ♘ge7 11 0-0-0+ ♔e8 12 h3 ♗h5 13 g4 ♗g6 14 ♘b5 a6 15 ♘xe5 axb5 16 ♘xg6 hxg6 17 ♗xb5 ♖xa2 18 ♔b1 ♖a5 19 c4 ± Bronstein-Beni, Munich 1958.

b) 5...♗e6 leads to the provocative endgame with doubled e-pawns, but here it is not to be recommended, as White's b1-knight has a clear route d2-c4 via which to attack the e5 weakness; for example, 6 ♗xe6 fxe6 7 ♘f3 ♗d6 8 ♘bd2! ♘f6 9 0-0 ♘c6 10 a3 a5 11 b3! ♔e7 12 ♗b2 ♘d7 13 a4! ± and White has implemented the general plan ♘bd2, b3, ♗b2, a4 with ♘c4 to follow, and Black has no counterplay, D.Paulsen-C.D.Meyer, 2nd Bundesliga 1993/4.

We now return to 5...♔e8 *(D)*:



6 ♘f3

Alternatives:

a) 6 ♘c3 c6! 7 ♘ge2 ♘d7 8 ♗e3 ♗c5 9 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 10 0-0 a5! 11 a4 ♘f6 12 ♘g3 g6 13 f3 ♔e7 14 ♖fd1 ♘fd7 15 b3 h5 16 h4 ♘b6 17 ♗e2 ♗e6 = 18 ♘f1 f5 19 g3 ♖af8 20 ♔g2 f4 21 ♘d2 ♖hg8 22 ♖h1 g5 and Black now even has the initiative, Pokorna-Novak, Bratislava 1998.

b) 6 ♗e3 ♘d7 7 ♘c3 c6 8 a4 a5 9 0-0-0 ♗c5! 10 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 11 ♘f3 f6 12 ♖d2 ♘h6! 13 ♘e1 ♗e6 14 ♗xe6 ♘xe6 15 ♘d3 ♔f7 16 f3 ♖hd8 17 ♖hd1 ♔e7 18 ♘e2 ♘f7 = Sarana-Novak, Slovakian Cht 1995/6.

6...♘d7

6...f6 7 ♗e3 ♘d7 8 a3 ♗c5 9 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 10 ♘c3 c6 11 b4 ♗e6! 12 ♗xe6 ♘xe6 13 0-0-0 ♘h6 14 h3 ♔e7 15 g3 ♘f7 16 ♖d2 ♘d6 17 ♖hd1 ♖hd8 = 18 ♖d3 a5 19 ♘d2 axb4 20 axb4 ♖a1+ 21 ♔b2 ♖xd1 22 ♘xd1 ♘g5! gave Black the better game in Pajer-Novak, Bratislava 1995.

7 0-0 ♗c5 8 ♘g5 ♘h6 9 ♘c3 c6 10 a4 a5 11 ♘e2 ♔e7 12 ♘g3 ♘b6 13 ♗b3 f6 14 ♘f3 ♘f7 15 ♘e1 ♘d6 16 ♘d3 ♘d7 17 ♗d2 ♗b6 18 ♖ad1 ♘f8 19 ♔h1 ♘e6

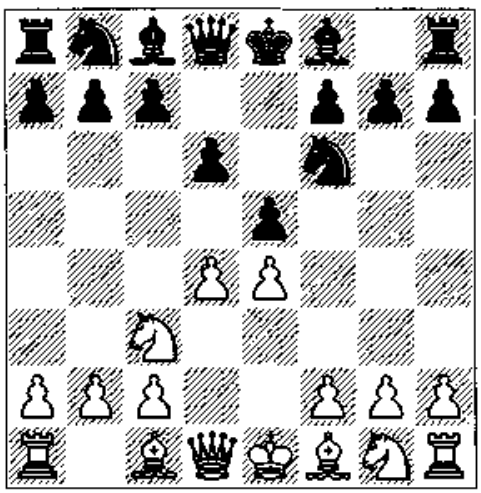
The game is equal, Papanetz-Novak, Slovakian Cht 1995/6.

Conclusion: 1 e4 d6 2 d4 e5 is a slightly suspect move-order for Black, firstly because of the transposition to the Philidor by 3 ♘f3, and secondly because of the endgame. In the latter, the Novak plan with 5...♔e8 is worth noting, and is more challenging than 5...♗e6.

B)

2...♘f6 3 ♘c3 e5 *(D)*

W



By playing the endgame system in this move-order Black gets a better version of the possible Philidor, and in the pure endgame system White has committed his knight to c3.

4 dxe5

4 ♘f3 transposes to a form of the Philidor Defence that is difficult to reach via standard move-orders. Black has quite a stable position, but it is slightly passive. For example: 4...♘bd7 5 ♗c4 ♗e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 a4 c6 8 ♖e1 ♕c7 9 ♗a2 b6 10 h3 ♗b7 11 ♗g5 (11 ♘h4 ♖fe8 12 ♘f5 ♗f8 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 ♕f3 ± Sergienko-Belikov, Voronezh 1998) 11...a6 12 d5 ♖ac8 13 dxc6 ♗xc6 14 ♖e2 h6 15 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 16 ♕d3 ♕b7 17 ♖d1 ± Zakharov-A.Horvath, Murek U-18 Ech 1998.

4...dxe5 5 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 6 ♗c4

Naturally, White has many alternatives here:

a) 6 f4 is also an important direct move here, and again the e5-square is key to Black's defence: 6...♘c6 (or 6...♘bd7!? 7 ♘f3 ♗d6 8 f5 c6 9 ♗d3 h6 10 g4 ½-½ V.Ivanov-Belikov, Moscow 1994) 7 ♘f3 ♗d6 8 f5 h6 9 ♗e3 a6 10 0-0-0 ♔e7 11 ♖g1 b5 12 a3 ♗b7 13 g4 ♘b8 14 ♗d3 ♘bd7 15 h4 h5 16 gxh5 ♘xh5 17 a4 b4 18 ♘e2 ♖af8 19 ♖g2 ♘hf6 20 ♖xg7 ♗xe4 21 ♗xe4 ♘xe4 = Hector-Buhr, 2nd Bundesliga 1997/8.

b) 6 ♗g5 is one of the tricky lines, but Black can continue with the standard plan ...♗d6, ...♘bd7, ...♔e8 and his position seems to be quite stable. 6...♗d6!? and now:

b1) 7 ♘d5 ♘bd7 8 ♗c4 ♔e8! 9 f3 ♘xd5 10 exd5 a6 11 a4 b6 12 ♘e2

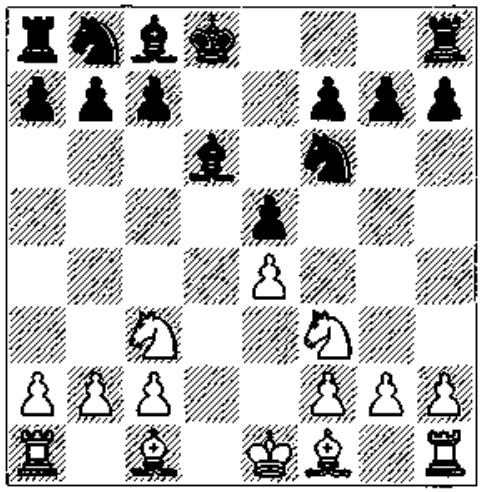
♗b7 13 0-0 f5 14 ♖ae1 ♔f7 15 ♗d2 ♘f6 ∓ Sasu Ducsoara-Litinskaya, Dresden wom 1997.

b2) 7 ♗c4 ♗e6 (7...♔e7? 8 ♘d5+ ±) 8 ♗xe6 fxe6 9 0-0-0 ♔e7 10 ♘ge2 h6 11 ♗h4 ♘c6 = Lednicky-Zapletal, Prievidza 1998.

b3) 7 0-0-0 ♘bd7 (7...♗e6?! 8 f4! gives White the initiative) 8 f3! a6 9 ♘ge2 h6 10 ♗e3 ♔e7 and Black's position seems to be quite stable, though White seized the initiative with 11 g4! in Veresagin-Akhmetov, Russian Cht (Orel) 1996.

c) 6 ♘f3 develops quickly and naturally. 6...♗d6 *(D)* and now:

W



c1) 7 ♗c4 is not so strong any more, as the black king finds a good central square with 7...♔e7; for example, 8 ♗g5 c6 9 0-0-0 ♗c7! 10 ♘h4 h6 11 ♗e3 (11 ♗xf6+ ♔xf6 12 ♖d3 ♔e7 13 ♘f5+ ♗xf5 14 exf5 ♘d7 15 ♘e4 ♖ad8 16 ♖hd1 ♘f6 17 ♘xf6 gxf6 18 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 19 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 = Karasev-Komliakov, St Petersburg 1996) 11...♗b6! 12 ♖he1 g6 = Geller-Nevednichy, Tiraspol 1994.

c2) 7 ♗g5 ♗e6 8 0-0-0 and now it is best for Black to play the careful 8...♘bd7! to stabilize the centre:

c21) 9 ♘b5 ♔e7 10 ♘xd6 cxd6 is generally useful for Black, as his centre becomes even stronger: 11 ♘d2 h6 12 ♗h4 g5 13 ♗g3 ♖ac8!? 14 f3 ♖c7 15 ♔b1 ♖hc8 16 c3 d5! 17 exd5 ♘xd5 18 ♖e1 f6 19 ♘b3 a5 ∓ Kljako-Cander, Bled 1993.

c22) 9 ♗xf6+ forces a weakening of Black's pawns, but it also allows the black king a safe square on e7: 9...gxf6 (9...♘xf6? 10 ♘xe5 ±) 10 ♘h4 ♗c5 11 ♖d2 c6 12 ♘a4 ♗f8 13 ♔b1 ♔c7 14 ♗e2 b5 15 ♘c3 ♗b4 16 ♖d3 ♘c5 17 ♖e3 ♗xc3 18 bxc3 ♖ad8 with an equal position, Inkiov-Spasov, Sofia 1996.

c23) 9 ♗b5 ♔c8 is slightly inconvenient for Black, but with precise moves he is OK; for example: 10 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 11 ♘g5 a6 12 ♗e2 ♖f8 13 ♘xe6 fxe6 14 f3 ♔d7 15 ♖d3 ♔e7 16 ♘d1 ♘d7 17 ♘e3 b5 = Bjornsson-Rausis, Cappelle la Grande 1993.

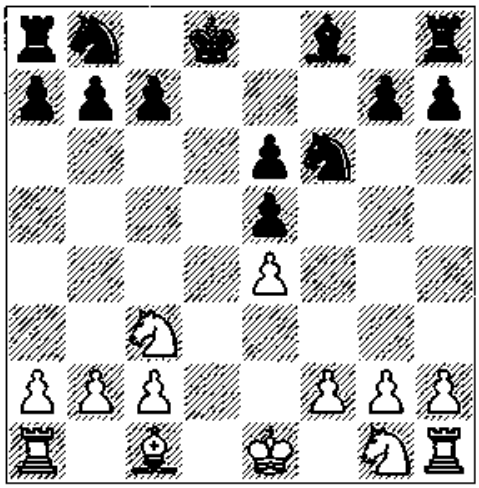
6...♗e6 7 ♗xe6

7 ♗b3 doesn't make a great deal of sense, and Black has no problems after 7...♘c6 8 ♗g5 ♘d4 9 0-0-0 ♔e8 10 ♗xf6 gxf6 11 ♘d5 ♗xd5 12 ♗xd5 c6 13 ♗c4 b5 14 c3 ♘e6 15 ♗b3 ♗c5 = Varavin-Chuprov, Omsk 1996.

7...fxe6 *(D)*

8 f3

White's main plan is to develop his pieces to exert pressure on e5 (♘h3-f2-d3, ♘d1-e3-c4, ♗e3) while at the same time keeping Black's counterplay under control. This overall plan has resulted in many different moves:



a) 8 ♗e3 is natural, but Black sometimes has an option of playing ...♗c5 to exchange the bishop; for example, 8...♘bd7! 9 f3 ♗c5 (9...♗b4!?) 10 ♔e2 ♔e7 11 ♘h3 ♗xe3 12 ♔xe3 ♘e8 13 ♘f2 ♘d6 ± Bancod-Bauer, Weilburg 1996.

b) After 8 ♗g5 ♘c6! 9 0-0-0+ ♗d6 10 ♘ge2 ♔e7 11 f3 a6 Black has no problems: 12 ♗e3 b5 13 ♘b1 ♘a5 14 ♘d2 h6 15 c3 ♖ab8 16 ♔c2 c5 17 b3 ♖hc8 18 ♖b1 c4 19 b4 ♘c6 = Rossetto-Leskovar, Cipolletti 1993.

c) 8 ♘ge2 is a flexible move, but Black has no special problems: 8...a6 9 ♗e3 ♗d6 10 0-0-0 ♘bd7 11 f3 ♔e7 12 ♖d2 h6 13 ♖hd1 b5! 14 ♔b1 ♗b4 15 a3 ♗a5 16 ♖d3 ♖hc8 17 g4 ♗b6 18 g5 hxg5 19 ♗xg5 ♘c5 20 ♖3d2 ♔f7 = Panchenko-Bologan, Gausdal 1991.

d) 8 ♘h3 commits the knight prematurely, since on g5 it usually has no clear purpose, while the plan of f3 and ♘f2 is quite slow: 8...♗d6 9 ♗e3 ♔e7 10 0-0-0 ♘c6 11 f3 a6 12 ♘f2 ♘h5 13 ♘d3 ♖hf8 14 ♘e2 ♘f4 15 ♘exf4 exf4 16 ♗f2 ♖g8 17 g4 ♘e5 18 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 19 ♗c5+ ♗d6 20 ♗d4 e5 21 ♗f2 ♔e6 with an equal position, Olsson-Bergström, Stockholm 1994.

8...♗c5! 9 ♘a4 ♗d6 10 ♗e3 ♘bd7

Otherwise:

a) 10...b6!? offers Black a chance to play a different set-up. After 11 ♘h3 ♔e7 12 ♘f2 c5 13 b3 he can challenge the white plan of attacking the weak point e5 with 13...♘c6 14 ♘d3 ♘b4. Black managed to hold the position after 15 ♔d2 ♘xd3 16 ♔xd3 ♔d7 17 ♘b2 ♔c6 18 c4 ♘d7 19 ♔c3 ♔c7 20 ♘d3 ♘b8 21 a3 a5 22 b4 axb4+ 23 axb4 cxb4+ 24 ♘xb4 ♘d7 25 ♘d3 ♖hf8 26 ♖hb1 h6 27 ♔c2 ♔c6 28 ♗d2 ♗c5 in Ryskin-Belikov, Czestochowa 1992.

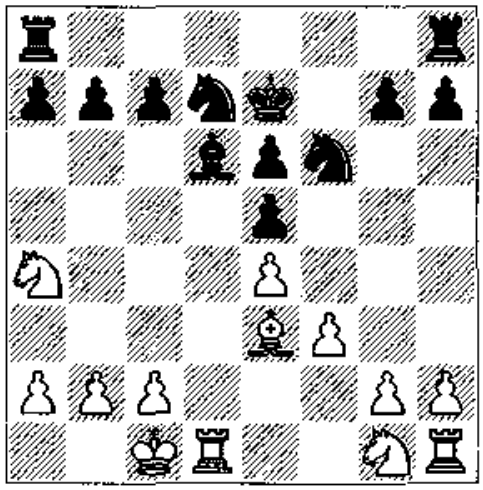
b) 10...♘fd7!? aims to overprotect e5 with 11 ♘h3 ♔e7 12 ♘f2 ♘c6 when again Black can counter White's build-up against e5 with 13 ♘d3 ♘b4; for example, 14 ♘xb4 ♗xb4+ 15 ♔e2 b5!? 16 a3 ♗a5!? (16...♗d6 17 ♘c3 a6 18 a4! c6 19 ♖hd1 gave White pressure in Vaïsser-Epishin, Novosibirsk 1993) 17 ♘c5 ♗b6 and according to Stohl, Black has sufficient counterplay.

11 0-0-0

11 ♘e2 ♔e7 12 b3 is best met by the thematic queenside counterplay with 12...b5! 13 ♘b2 ♗b4+ 14 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 15 ♔xd2 ♖hd8 16 ♔e3 ♘c5 and Black has no problems; for example: 17 a4 a6 18 b4 ♘xa4 19 ♘xa4 bxa4 20 ♖xa4 c5 21 bxc5 ♖dc8 22 ♖c4 ♘d7 23 c6 ♘b6 24 ♖c3 ♘a4 25 ♖b3 ♖xc6 26 ♖b7+ ♔f8 27 ♖a1 ♘c5 28 ♖b2 ♘d7 29 ♖b7 ♘c5 30 ♖b2 ♘d7 31 ♖b7 ½-½ Vaïsser-Gallagher, French Cht 1998.

11...♔e7 *(D)*

W



This is the basic set-up for Black. The centre is blocked, all Black's pieces have been developed, and his back rank is free for manoeuvring. So Black has time to start thinking about some counterplay, usually on the queenside.

Now:

a) 12 ♘e2 a6 ½-½ Belikov-Komliakov, Russian Army Ch 1995.

b) 12 ♘h3 b5! 13 ♘c3 ♖hb8 14 ♘f2 and then:

b1) 14...b4?! 15 ♘e2 a5 16 ♔b1 h6 17 ♖d2 a4 18 ♖c1 ♘b6 19 c4 gives White the initiative. In Gipslis-Moskalenko, Alushta 1993 Black managed to draw, but only because after 19...bxc3 20 ♖xc3 ♘fd7 21 ♘d3 ♖a5 22 ♖dc2 ♘c8 23 ♔c1 ♘a7 24 ♖c4 ♘b6, White missed 25 ♖xc7+!.

b2) 14...a6! is better.

Conclusion: The endgame system 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 e5 is a sound opening for Black. The Philidor positions in this move-order are playable, and it is difficult to point out a clear plan for White to guarantee an advantage in the endgame system.

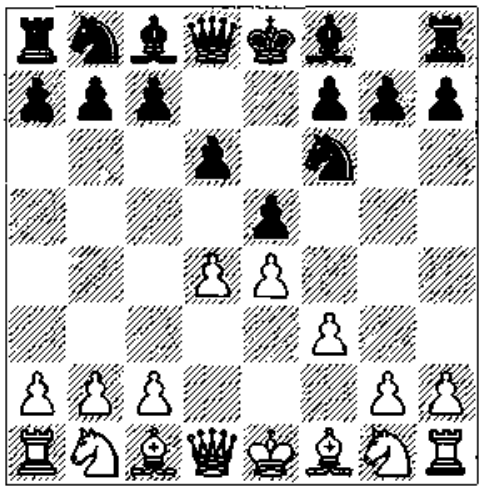
C)

2...♘f6 3 f3

Against this move there are some options given in Line B of Chapter 25, but the endgame system is also possible here.

3...e5 *(D)*

W



4 dxe5

The other, more strategic, approach is 4 d5 but Black should be quite OK with the continuation 4...♗e7 5 ♗e3 0-0, and now:

a) 6 ♗d3 c6 7 c4 b5 8 ♘c3 b4!? (8...bxc4 9 ♗xc4 ♗b7 10 ♕b3! ♕c7 11 ♘ge2 ♘bd7 12 ♖c1! ± Gelfand-Adams, Tilburg 1996) 9 ♘ce2 a5 10 ♘g3 ♘a6 11 ♘1e2 ♘c5 12 0-0 cxd5 13 cxd5 ♘fd7 14 ♗c4 ♗g5 15 ♕c1 ♗xe3+ 16 ♕xe3 g6 = Van den Doel-Hartoch, Netherlands 1994.

b) 6 c4 c6 (6...♘e8!? is also possible, with the plan 7 ♕d2 h6! 8 ♘c3 ♗g5! 9 ♗xg5 ♕xg5 10 ♕xg5 hxg5 11 g4 ♘f6 12 ♘h3 ♘h7 13 ♘b5 ♘a6 =

Starostits-Voloshin, Trinec 1998) 7 ♘c3 (7 ♕d2 b5 8 cxb5 cxd5 9 exd5 ♘bd7 10 ♘c3 ♗b7 11 ♗c4 ♖c8 12 ♗b3 a6 13 bxa6 ♗xa6 gives Black counterplay, Ivanchuk-Khalifman, Tilburg 1994) 7...a6! 8 ♕d2 cxd5! 9 cxd5 ♘bd7 10 ♗d3 b5 11 ♘ge2 ♘b6 12 b4 ♗d7 13 0-0 ♕b8 14 ♖fc1 ♕b7 15 ♘d1 ♖fc8 16 ♘b2 ♗d8 = Votava-Mokry, Turnov 1996.

4...dxe5 5 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 6 ♗c4 ♔e7!?

In this position this move, connected with the plan of ...♗e6 and ...♔xe6, seems to be the best option.

a) 6...♗e6 7 ♗xe6 fxe6 leads an endgame that is slightly suspect for Black; for example, 8 ♘h3!, and now:

a1) 8...♗c5 9 ♘f2 ♗xf2+ 10 ♔xf2 ♘c6 (10...♘bd7!? is another idea) 11 ♗e3 ♔e7 12 ♘a3! a6 13 c3 ♖hd8 (13...♖ag8!?) 14 ♔e2 h6 15 ♘c2 ♖d7 16 ♖hd1 ♖ad8 17 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 18 ♘e1! ♘e8 19 ♘d3 ♘d6 20 ♗f2! b6 21 ♗g3 (Yusupov-Christiansen, Las Palmas 1993) 21...♔f6 ± Stohl.

a2) 8...♗d6 9 ♘d2! ♔e7 10 ♘c4 ♘c6 11 ♗d2 b5 12 ♘e3 a6 13 ♘f2 ♘b8 14 a4! ± Bezgodov-S.Kasparov, Minsk 1998.

b) 6...♔e8 is a bit too passive, despite the fact that Black has chances to equalize; for example, 7 ♗e3 ♘bd7 8 ♘d2 (8 ♘c3 c6 9 a4 a5 10 ♘ge2 ♗c5 11 ♘d1 ♔e7 12 ♘c1 ♘e8 13 ♘d3 ♗xe3 14 ♘xe3 ♘d6 15 ♗b3 b6 16 c3 ♗a6 17 ♗c2 g6 18 0-0-0 ♘c4 19 ♖he1 ♘xe3 20 ♖xe3 ♖ad8 21 ♘f2 ♘c5 = Blatny-Ftačnik, Bundesliga 1994/5) 8...♗c5 9 ♗g5 (9 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 10 b4 ♘e6 11 ♘e2 a5 12 bxa5 ♖xa5 13 ♘b3 ♖a3 14 ♘ec1 ♔e7 15 ♘d3 ♘d7 leads to equality, Czebe-De Santis, Budapest 1997) 9...h6 10 ♗h4 and now:

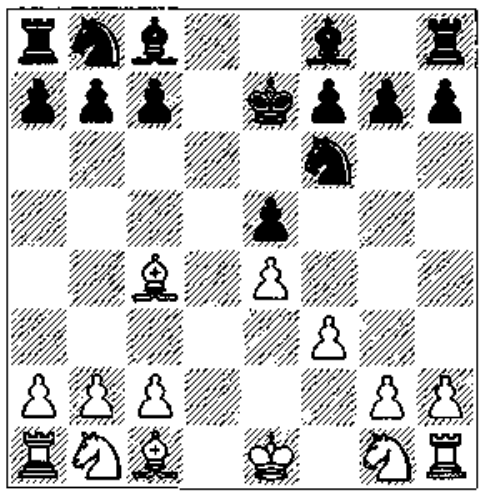
b1) 10...♘h5!? 11 ♘e2 ♘f4 12 ♘xf4 exf4 13 ♘b3?! (13 0-0-0!?) 13...♗e3 14 ♖d1 g5 15 ♗f2 ♗xf2+ 16 ♔xf2 ♘e5 gives Black a slight advantage, Blatny-Jansa, Zlin 1997.

b2) 10...♗e7 11 ♗f2 and now:

b21) 11...♗c5 12 ♘h3 ♗xf2+?! (12...♗b6! = Kramnik) 13 ♘xf2 ♔e7 14 0-0-0 ± Kramnik-Speelman, Biel IZ 1993.

b22) 11...♘h5! 12 ♘e2 ♘f4 13 ♘xf4 exf4 = Kramnik.

We now return to the position after 6...♔e7 *(D)*:



7 ♗e3

7 ♘c3 gives Black two ways to cover the d5-square:

a) 7...♗e6!? 8 ♘d5+ ♗xd5 9 exd5 ♔d6 10 b3 ♘xd5 11 ♗a3+ ♔e6 12 ♗xd5+ ♔xd5 13 ♖d1+ ♔e6 14 ♖d8? ♗b4+ 0-1 Reilly-Leskiewicz, Melbourne 1998.

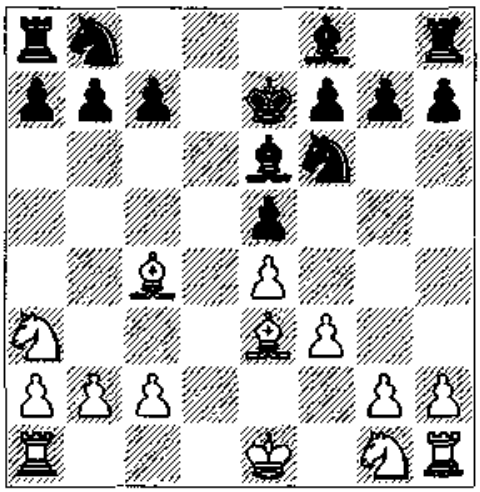
b) 7...c6 8 ♗e3 ♗e6 9 ♗c5+ ♔e8 10 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 11 ♗xe6 fxe6 12 ♘h3 a5

13 ♘d1 ♔e7 14 ♘e3 ♘bd7 = Bojković-Shumiakina, Yugoslav Cht (Igalo) 1994.

7...♗e6 8 ♘a3 *(D)*

8 ♘d2 is more passive than the text-move: 8...♘bd7 9 0-0-0 ♗xc4 (9...g6!? 10 ♘e2 h5 11 ♗f2 ♗h6 12 ♔b1 ♖hd8 13 ♗d3 ♘e8 14 ♘c4 b6 15 a4 f6 16 ♘c1 c6 = T.Georgadze-Rivas, Malaga 1991) 10 ♘xc4 ♔e6 11 ♘h3 h6 12 f4 ♘g4 13 f5+ ♔e7 14 ♘f2 ♘xe3 15 ♘xe3 ♔e8 16 ♘d3 c6 17 ♘c4 f6 18 g4 ♘b6 = Sveshnikov-Panchenko, Moscow 1994.

B



8...♘bd7

8...♗xc4 is premature, and only helps White develop: 9 ♘xc4 ♘c6 10 a4! ♔e6 11 ♘h3 h6 12 c3 a6 13 ♘f2 ♗e7 14 a5 ♖ad8 15 ♔e2 ♘d7 16 g4 h5 17 g5 f5 18 gxf6 gxf6 19 ♖hg1 ♖dg8 20 ♘d3 f5 21 exf5+ ♔xf5 22 ♖ad1 ♔e6 23 ♗f2 ♗d6 24 b4 ♘e7 25 ♘d2 ± Ionescu-Nevednichy, Bucharest 1994.

9 0-0-0

9 ♗xe6 ♔xe6 10 ♘b5 ♘e8 11 ♘xa7? c6 ∓.

9...a6 10 ♗xe6 ♔xe6

Black has good chances of neutralizing White's initiative, and if this succeeds, then Black's king might be a good piece in the more simplified endgame.

11 ♘c4

Thus far Ionescu-Nevednichy, Bucharest 1995. Now the logical route to equality seems to be 11...♗c5 12 ♘h3 h6 13 ♘f2 ♗xe3+ 14 ♘xe3 ♖hd8.

Conclusion: The endgame system is also possible against 3 f3, and especially the new approach with 6...♔e7 is worth noting. Black should also be aware of the sideline with 4 d5.

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B1)

2 c4 e5
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2: 3 ♘f3: Main Line with g3
1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 f5 5 ♘c3 ♗e7 6 ♘h3 c6 7 g3 ♘f6 *14* **8 ♗g2** *14*
A: **8...♘bd7!?** *15*
B: **8...0-0** *17* **9 0-0** *17*
B1: 9...♘a6 *17*
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3: 3 ♘f3: Main Line with e3
1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 f5 5 ♘c3 ♗e7 6 ♘h3 *23* **6...c6** (6...c5!? *41*; 6...♘f6 intending ...c5 *41*) **7 e3 ♘f6** *23*
A: **8 ♘f4** *24*
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4: 5th Move Alternatives for White
1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 f5 *30*
A: 5 g3 *31*
B: 5 f3 *32*

5: 4th Move Alternatives for White
1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 *35*
A: 4 ♘g1!? *35*
B: 4 ♘fd2!? *37*

6: What Else Can Black Play?
1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘f3 e4 4 ♘g5 f5 5 ♘c3 *41*
A: 5...♗e7 *41*
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8: 3 ♘c3 exd4 4 ♕xd4 ♘c6
1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘c3 exd4 4 ♕xd4 ♘c6 *51*
A: **5 ♕d1** *51*
B: **5 ♕d2** *53* **5...♘f6** *53*
B1: **6 b3** *53*
B2: **6 g3** *56* **6...♗e6!** *56*
B21: 7 ♘d5 *57*
B22: 7 e4 *59*

9: 3 ♘c3 exd4 4 ♕xd4 ♘f6
1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 ♘c3 exd4 4 ♕xd4 ♘f6 *62*
A: 5 ♗g5 *62*
B: 5 e4 *63*
C: 5 b3 *64*
D: 5 g3 *65*

10: 3rd Move Alternatives for White
1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 *67*
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B: 3 d5 *70*
C: 3 e3 *74*

12: 3 c4 ♘d7
1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 c4 ♘d7 *80*
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C2: 5 h3 *92*
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D2: **5 g3!** *101*

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1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 c4
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C: **3...♘d7 4 ♘c3 ♗xf3** *116*

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1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 c4 e5 *119*
4 dxe5 ♘c6 *119* 5 ♗g5!? ♕d7 *120*

15: 3 e4
1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 e4 *122*
A: **3...♘d7!?** *122*
B: **3...♘f6** *123*
B1: **4 ♗d3** *123*
B2: **4 ♘c3** *125* **4...e6** *125*
B21: **5 ♗e2** *126* **5...♗e7** *126*
B211: 6 0-0 *126*
B212: 6 d5 *129*
B22: **5 h3** *131* **5...♗h5 6 ♕e2!? c6 7 g4 ♗g6** *132*
B221: **8 ♗g5!?** *132* **8...♗e7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 h4** *133*
B2211: 10...h6?! *133*
B2212: 10...h5 *134*
B222: **8 h4** *134*

16: 3rd Move Alternatives for White
1 d4 d6 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 *139*
A: 3 ♘bd2 *139*
B: 3 ♕d3 *140*
C: 3 h3 *141*
D: 3 g3 *143*
E: 3 c3 *144*
F: 3 e3 *145*
G: 3 ♗g5 *146*
H: 3 ♗f4 *147*
I: 3 b3 *148*

18: Serious Alternatives for White
1 d4 d6
A: 2 g3 *151*
B: 2 ♗g5 *156*
C: 2 ♘c3 *157*

19: Odds and Ends
1 d4 d6 *159*
A: 2 f4?! *159*
B: 2 ♗f4 *160*
C: 2 c3 *161*
D: 2 b3 *162*
E: 2 e3 *162*

21: The Austrian Attack with 5...c5
1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6 4 f4 ♗g7 *168* **5 ♘f3 c5** *168*
A: 6 ♗b5+ *169*
B: 6 dxc5 *172*

22: The Classical Pirc with 6...♗g4
1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 0-0 ♗g4 *175*
A: **7 ♗e3** *176* **7...♘c6** *176*
A1: 8 ♕d2 *177*
A2: 8 d5 *180*
B: **7 h3** *182*

23: The Pirc with ♗e3
1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6
A: **4 h3 ♗g7 5 ♗e3** *184*
B: **4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e3** *188*
C: **4 ♗e3** *190* **4...c6 5 ♕d2 b5** *191*
C1: 6 f3 *192*
C2: 6 ♗d3 *194*

24: The Pirc with ♗g5 or ♗f4
1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6
A: **4 ♗f4** *197* (4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗f4 *197*)
B: **4 ♗g5** *198* 4...♗g7 5 ♕d2 h6 *200* 6 ♗h4 ♘bd7 *201*

25: Pirc: Miscellaneous Lines
1 e4 d6 2 d4 (2 f4 *235*) **2...♘f6** *203* (2...e5 *261*)
A: **3 ♗d3** *203*
B: **3 f3** *207* (3...e5 *266*)
C: **3 ♘c3** *210* **3...g6** *210* (3...c6 *238*; 3...e5 *263*)
C1: 4 ♗e2 *210*
C2: 4 ♗c4 *212*
C3: 4 g3 *215*

27: The Réti and English with ♘f3
1 ♘f3 d6 *220*
A: **2 g3** *220*
B: **2 c4** *221* **2...e5 3 ♘c3 f5** *221*
B1: 4 d3 *222*
B2: 4 d4 *224*
B3: 4 g3 *226*

28: The English Opening without an Early ♘f3
1 c4 d6 *228* **2 ♘c3 e5 3 g3 f5 4 ♗g2 ♘f6** *228*
A: 5 d4 *229*
B: 5 d3 *230*

29: Rare First Moves
A: 1 b3 *232* (1 g3 *232*)
B: 1 b4 *234*
C: 1 f4 *235*

30: Other Options for Black: Introduction
1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 c6 *238*

31: The Old Indian with ...♗f5
1 d4 d6 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 (3 ♘f3 ♗f5 4 ♘c3 *247*) **3...♗f5** *240*
A: **4 g3** *241*
B: **4 f3** *242*
C: **4 ♘f3** *247* **4...g6** *247*
C1: 5 g3 *249*
C2: 5 ♘h4 *251*

32: 1 d4 d6 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 e5 4 ♘f3 e4
1 d4 d6 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 e5 *253* **4 ♘f3 e4** *253*
A: **5 ♘g1** *253*
B: **5 ♘d2** *254*
C: **5 ♘g5** *256* **5...♗f5 6 g4 ♗xg4 7 ♗g2 ♗e7 8 ♘gxe4 ♘xe4** *257*
C1: 9 ♘xe4 *257*
C2: 9 ♗xe4 *258*

33: Endgame Systems when White Plays e4
1 e4 d6 2 d4
A: 2...e5 *261*
B: 2...♘f6 3 ♘c3 e5 *263*
C: 2...♘f6 3 f3 e5 *266*